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الغزالي

Al-Ghazali

THE JUST BALANCE

[AL-QISTĀS AL-MUSTAQIM]

القسط المستقيم

A Translation with Introduction and Notes

by

D.P. BREWSTER



SH. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
KASHMIRI BAZAR LAHORE

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DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
RICHARD WALZER

Preface

Al-Ghazālī, who lived from 450/1058 to 505/1111, was the most distinguished theologian of the classical age of Islamic thought. There is, therefore, no need to offer further justification of a fresh translation of one of his works. A number of his works have already appeared in an English rendering by such scholars as Nabih Amin Faris, W. Montgomery Watt and Sabih Ahmad Kamali (see Appendix IV). *The Just Balance* has hitherto been available only to Western students of Islam in a French translation, that of Chelhot (see below). My intention in providing this translation is to illuminate the debate between the orthodox (or Sunnī) position and that occupied by a group loosely termed the Ismā'īlīs.¹ Al-Ghazālī's style is polemical—his argument comes through very clearly and shows the use he made of philosophical methods. He was also capable of writing what could be termed "pastoral theology," as in his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, of engaging in debate with the philosophers of Islam, or of discussing philosophical methods. As is well known, he was also an important writer on mysticism (Ṣūfism). *The Just Balance* thus represents one facet of his writing, dealing with a particular historical situation. On reading his autobiography and on becoming more aware of the movements of his time we can see how important to him were the issues raised in this work, as the Introduction attempts to show.

My debt to other scholars in this field will be obvious

1. The nomenclature of this group is discussed below, especially in Appendix I.

from my notes. I am particularly grateful to Professor W. Montgomery Watt, of the University of Edinburgh, for allowing me to quote from his works *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī* and *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of al-Ghazālī*. I am also grateful to Edicom N.V., Laren, Holland, for permission to reproduce the material in Appendix II, from Marshall G.S. Hodgson's *The Order of the Assassins*, published by Mouton and Co., The Hague, Holland. This translation could not have been undertaken without the critical text prepared by Father Victor Chelhot and printed by the Catholic Press of Beirut, together with Chelhot's translation and notes which appeared in the *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* of the Institut Français de Damas. As indicated in the notes, I have differed from Chelhot's rendering at a number of points, but I have continually been stimulated by the work that he has done on this small book of al-Ghazālī's.

This translation is designed to be read alongside Watt's translation of al-Ghazālī's autobiography, *Al-Munqidh Min al-Dalāl* (*The Deliverance from Error*).² For the purpose of comparison reference may also be made to the French translation of the autobiography prepared by Farid Jabre.³ *The Just Balance* is mentioned five times in the *Munqidh*,⁴ and develops criteria for examining arguments in religion which al-Ghazālī passes over more quickly in the latter. It, therefore, complements this work and adds to our knowledge of al-Ghazālī's methods, particularly

2. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, pp. 19-85.

3. Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqidh min Adalāl* [sic.] (*Erreur et Deliverance*). Jabre's pioneering work on the vocabulary of al-Ghazālī, *Essai sur la Lexique de Ghazālī*, is indispensable for serious study.

4. Watt, op. cit., pp. 49, 52 and 77.

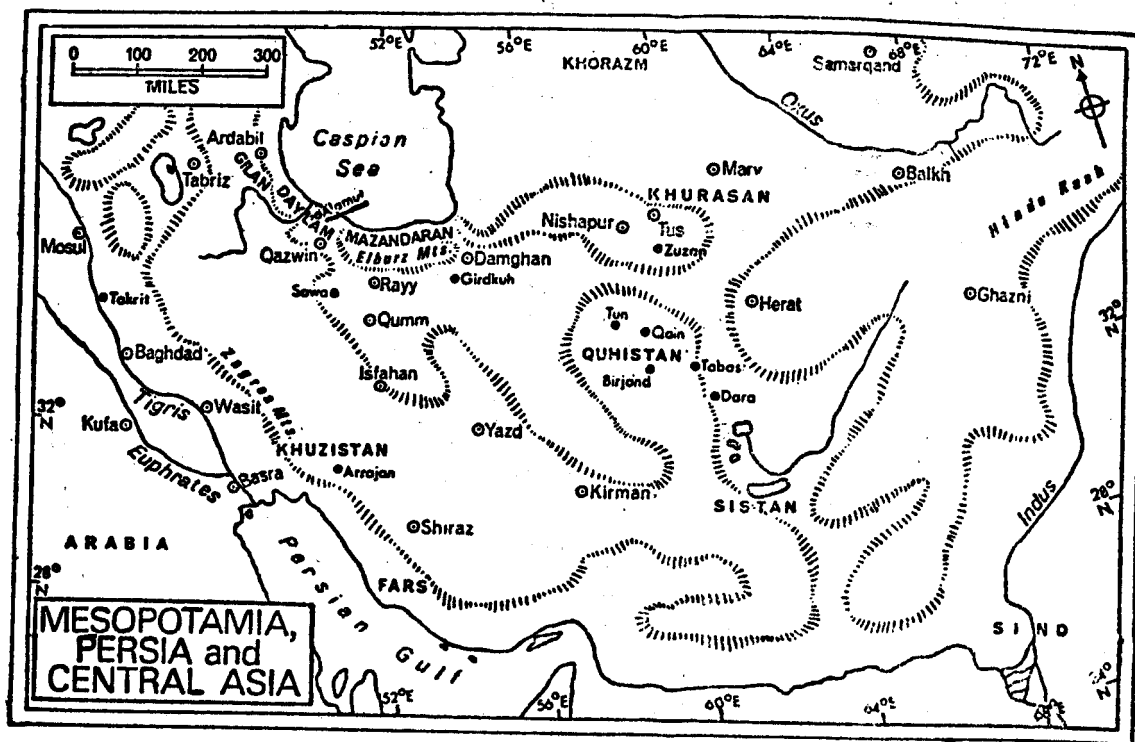
his use of the syllogism, examined in Appendix III. What distinguishes al-Ghazālī's literary style in the present work is his use of the question-and-answer method to elaborate the points that he makes.

I am most grateful to Mr M. Ashraf Darr, Hon. Publication Advisor and Secretary to the Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, for his kindness in editing and rearranging this work. His willingness to advise and his collaboration in the publication of this translation is deeply appreciated.

Further, I am most grateful to Sh. Muhammad Ashraf for undertaking this publication. He has placed all students of al-Ghazālī in his debt by the series of translations which he has brought to their bookshelves.

July 1978

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MAPS

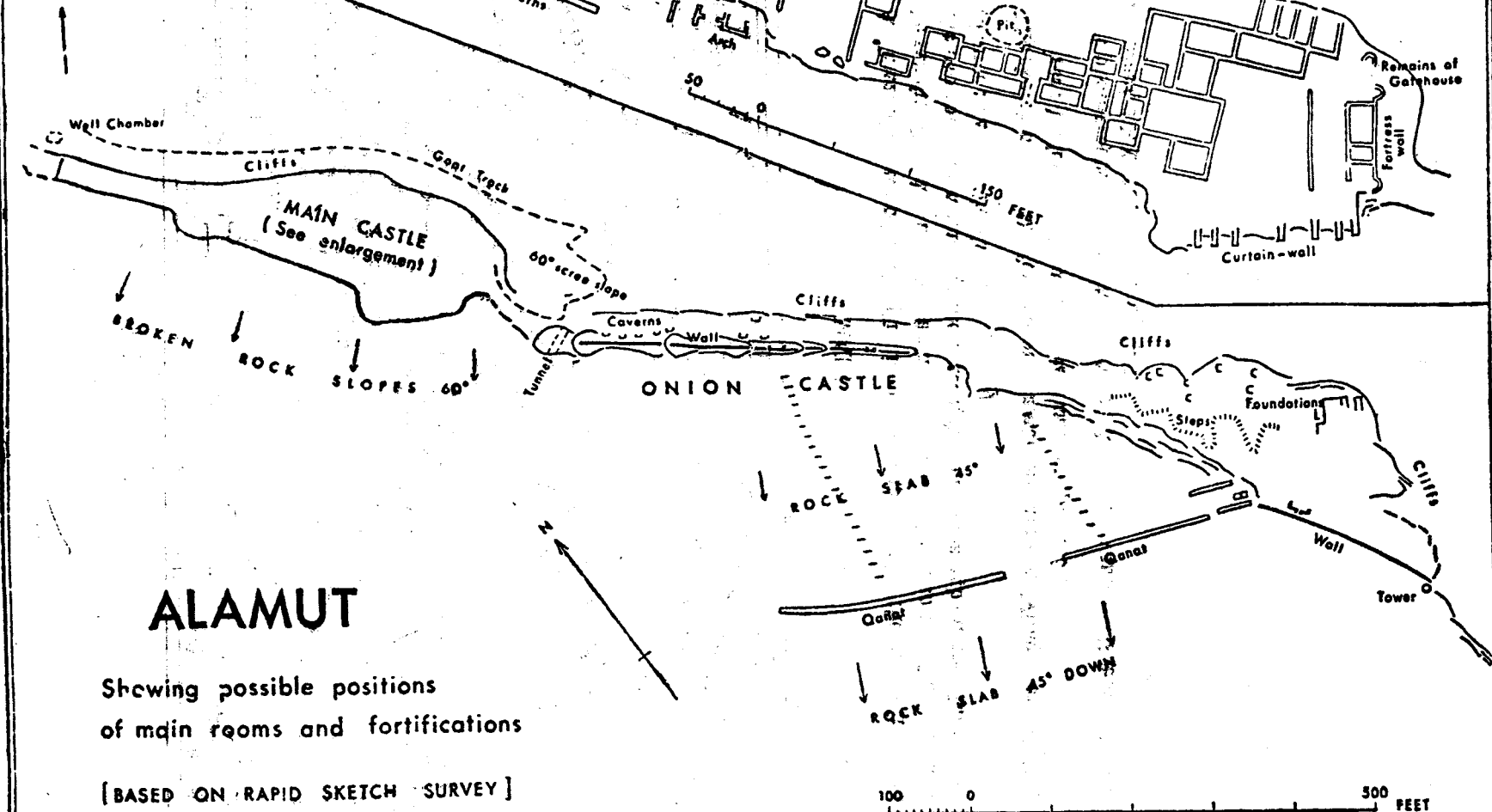
Above: Al-Ghazālī's place of birth, Tūs, is shown together with the places in which he taught, Baghdad and Nishāpūr. Alamūt is to be found in Daylam, and the two towns mentioned in the text, Isfahān and Damghān, are also shown. (Source: Lewis, *The Assassins*, p. 69.)

Over: The sketch plan of the fortress of Alamūt prepared by Willey's expedition. (Source: Willey, *The Castles of the Assassins*, pp. 216-17.)

The clearest photographs of the site are to be found in Ivanow, "Alamūt," *Geographical Journal*, LXXVII (1931), pp. 38-45.

Main Castle

TO MAIN RIDGE



Acknowledgments

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- Edicom, N.V.: Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Order of the Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizārī Isma'īlīs against the Islamic World*, Mouton and Co., 1955
- Columbia University Press: Al-Baghdādī, *Moslem Schisms and Sects (Al-Fark Bain al-Firak)* being the History of the Various Philosophic Systems Developed in Islam, tr. Kate Chambers Seelye, Columbia University Press, 1920, reprinted AMS Press, Inc., 1966
- Routledge and Kegan Paul: Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyāsat-nāma or Siyār al-Mulūk*, tr. Hubert Darke, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1960
- Darton, Longman and Todd: Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, rev. students' ed., Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 1958
- Weidenfeld and Nicholson: Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, Ltd., 1967
- George G. Harrap: Peter R.E. Willey, *The Castles of the Assassins*, George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1963

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Introduction

The work here translated, *Al-Qistās al-Mustaqīm*, *The Just Balance*, was described by Goldziher as "the most interesting of these works (of polemic) in its form and substance".¹ As will shortly be shown, the polemic was directed against one particular school of Islamic thought, that of the Ismā'īlīs. But this text is interesting not only as a work directed against those with whom al-Ghazālī had little sympathy. It reveals the state of Islamic theology at a crucial period of its formulation and it demonstrates the methods which were adopted by one of the foremost exponents of that theology, one who became known as "the proof of Islam" (*Ḥujjat al-Islām*) by his admirers. It reveals, furthermore, the extent to which the theologians of Islam were acquainted with the methods of Greek philosophy and the extent to which they were prepared to adopt these methods in the defence of their faith.

The life of al-Ghazālī has been discussed from a number of different points of view and need not be retold here. Important discussions are indicated in the Bibliography. Al-Ghazālī depended on high patronage for his advancement to the chair at Baghdad, his patron being the Vizir Nizām al-Mulk.² The Islamic Empire had been threatened by a schismatic group called the Ismā'īlīs³ at least 150

1. I. Goldziher, *Le Dogme et La Loi de l'Islam*, p. 295, note 156.

2. For the career of this notable statesman, his patronage of theologians, and the dynasty he served, the Seljuks, see *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. V, Chaps. 1 and 2.

3. The Ismā'īlīs are also called "Seveners" in English, and Bāṭiniyyah in Arabic. Their line of Imāms terminated with Ismā'īl, in

years before al-Ghazālī was born. During the first half of the tenth century of the Christian era (corresponding to the first half of the fourth century of the Islamic era) the whole of North Africa and Egypt fell to the political cause with which this group was allied, the Fāṭimids.⁴ Egypt was to remain subject to the Fāṭimids until reconquered for the Empire by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (usually called Saladin in English) in 1171. Even the capital, Baghdad, was for a short time occupied by a general favourable to the Fāṭimid cause, about the time of al-Ghazālī's birth.⁵ This preoccupation of the Empire with its vigorous rivals was reflected in the writing of al-Ghazālī, for not only did he spend much of the second period of his life rethinking his own theology, but he also wrote several tracts against the Ismā'īlīs, of which *The Just Balance* forms one. He was urged to do this by his patrons who saw in him a powerful "defender of the faith," and another such work, the *Mustaḥsirī*, is dedicated to al-Mustaḥsir, the Caliph who took office in 1094 and at the oath of allegiance to whom al-Ghazālī was present in February 1094. But the existence of a fanatical group amongst the Ismā'īlīs was brought home in an intensely personal way to al-Ghazālī by the assassination⁶ of his patron, the Vizīr Nizām al-Mulk, on 14 October 1092.

It has been argued by Jabre⁷ that al-Ghazālī's personal contrast to the more numerous "Twelvers". See Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, Chap. IV.

4. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edn.) (henceforth EI2), "Fāṭimids".

5. See EI2, "Al-Basāsiri". On another front the Caliphs faced the Crusaders, who captured Jerusalem on 15 July 1099. Al-Ghazālī did not mention this event, nor was he affected by it.

6. The term "assassin" is derived from the Arabic *ḥashshāshīn*, and was an epithet of opprobrium; Lewis, *The Assassins*, pp. 10-12.

7. "La Biographie et l'Oeuvre de Ghazālī. . ."

crisis in 1095⁸ was a direct result of the insecurity he now felt at the assassination of his patron. Jabre argued that not only did al-Ghazālī fear for his own life at the hands of this fanatical group, but also that his whole theology was henceforth determined by his abhorrence of its members and teaching. This view, while interesting, has been shown by Watt to be exaggerated.⁹ Watt believes that, while al-Ghazālī continued to be concerned about the inroads that the Ismā'īlīs were making into the ranks of the Sunnīs, this was not his dominating purpose in writing theology, nor was this event the sole cause of al-Ghazālī's crisis. He did not run away solely "to avoid being assassinated".¹⁰ He withdrew to re-establish the bases for his theology and, in part, to continue his personal struggle against the type of sectarian theology with which he was by now so bitterly involved. *The Just Balance* reflects his continuing concern with this struggle and, as will be shown, is probably to be placed in the third period of his writing, among the works of his later dogmatic period.¹¹

Having discussed the general background to this book it is now necessary to establish the broad views of the theological parties concerned.

(A) *The Sunnīs*. Sometimes termed "the Orthodox party," this group was, and remains, the largest in Islam.

8. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p. 201, gives the chronology of al-Ghazālī's life.

9. Watt, "The Study of al-Ghazālī," *Oriens*, XIII-XIV (1961). (henceforth "Study"), and *Muslim Intellectual*, pp. 140-43.

10. Watt, "Study," p. 129.

11. Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to Al-Ghazālī," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1952, pp. 31, 44. For al-Ghazālī's mention of his five works against the Ismā'īlīs, see Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 52.

Their name indicates that they followed the *sunnah* (literally, the "beaten path") established by the revelation of the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad. In *The Just Balance* one of the crucial issues discussed is the way in which these sources should be interpreted, for uncontrolled methods of interpretation lead to results which differ widely. The classical principles formulated by the Sunnīs allowed the use of a consensus of opinion (*ijmā'*) and of analogy (*qiyās*) to achieve an agreed corpus in theology. Another instrument, that of personal opinion (*ra'y*), is discussed in this book (Chapter Seven) and is there contrasted by the Ta'ḥmiyyah with the "authoritative teaching" (*ta'lim*) of their leader. For the Sunnīs, however, the principle of such "authoritative teaching," with the implied guarantee of infallibility, as interpreted by the Ta'ḥmiyyah, could not be accepted. The Sunnī position implied, by contrast, a much greater freedom, provided only that the minimum obligations were accepted.¹² Al-Ghazālī continued the defence of this position which was largely created by al-Ash'arī.¹³

(B) *The Shi'ah*. The term *Shi'ah* literally means "party" and came to be used as an abbreviation for the phrase "party of 'Alī," who was the son-in-law of Muḥammad by his marriage to Fāṭimah. The movement of support for a charismatic hereditary leader called the *Imām* began after Muḥammad's death, when three other claimants to the succession were preferred over 'Alī, 'Alī himself did not succeed to the Caliphate until 656 and was

12. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*, p. 81: "The Sunnī principle has been to extend the limits of toleration as widely as possible." Compare The Qur'ān, 2: 258: "No compulsion is there in religion."

13. For the development of this position, see the discussion in Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*.

murdered in 661. Thereafter, with the exception of the Fāṭimid regime in Egypt (969-1171), the Shi'ī party was seldom able to gain power other than in small, semi-autonomous States. The only area in which the Shi'īs have enjoyed power for a long period has been Iran, where they are now chiefly concentrated. Theologically, the Shi'īs are distinct from the Sunnīs in teaching that the true interpretation of the Qur'ān is given by the *Imām* of the age.¹⁴ As already indicated, the Shi'īs are themselves split into two groups, the "Twelvers" and the "Seveners".

(i) The "Twelvers" follow the descent of the *Imāms* by designation (*naṣṣ*) through to the twelfth *Imām* who disappeared in 878. According to their belief, he will return in due course. In the meantime, the appointed leaders of the community act on his behalf, teaching the true interpretation of the Qur'ān and the associated framework of beliefs.

(ii) The "Seveners" follow the descent of the *Imāms* only through to Ismā'īl, whom they claim to have been the legitimate *Imām* in succession to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, but who was disallowed by the "Twelvers" because of his allegedly bad character.¹⁵ Another term for the "Seveners" which is used in al-Ghazālī's writings is Bāṭiniyyah. This term reflects their belief in the inner, or esoteric, content of the interpreted Qur'ān and derives from 57: 3: "He (God) is . . . the Outward (*ẓāhir*) and the Inward (*bāṭin*)."¹⁶ The Bāṭiniyyah might thus be described as "the people of inner truth," implying that there is a corpus of esoteric teaching to which they alone have access in the person of their

14. See EI2, "Imām". The most recent account of Shi'ī theology is Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Shi'ite Islam*.

15. See EI2, "Ismā'īliyya," and Lewis, *The Assassins*, Chap. 2.

Imām. Hence the exclusive claims which the Bāṭiniyyah put forward in the pages of al-Ghazālī's accounts.¹⁶

At this point we must add yet a further term, which describes a group within the Bāṭiniyyah. In the course of *The Just Balance* the terms *ta'lim*, or "authoritative teaching," and Ta'limiyyah (or "people of authoritative teaching") will be seen to play a key role. Who are the Ta'limiyyah and what is this "authoritative teaching"? Although in some contexts it might seem that the terms Bāṭiniyyah and Ta'limiyyah are interchangeable in al-Ghazālī's writing,¹⁷ it is more than likely that the Ta'limiyyah are a sub-group of the former. The precise details of their founding are not completely clear, but they are certainly associated with the figure of al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ.¹⁸ It is known that al-Ḥasan visited Egypt in the year 1078, and it is sometimes suggested that his reception in this stronghold of the Fāṭimids (who taught the "Seveners" theology as the official theology of the State and founded a missionary college, al-Azhar, for the express purpose of spreading it) was less than cordial. However, this theory has not been substantiated. On his return from Egypt he must have become convinced that

"the Fāṭimid government was losing its revolutionary fervour and, besides having little enthusiasm, was no

16. See EI2, "Bāṭiniyya".

17. See Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 26, 48, 52.

18. See EI2, "Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ," and Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, pp. 79, 81 and 84. A fuller account will be found in Lewis, *The Assassins*, and Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," Chap. 5 of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. V (1968). Hodgson's earlier work, *The Order of the Assassins* (1955), was a pioneering work in this field and contains many essential passages in translation. However, it is scarce. Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ is the Persian form of the name.

longer capable of making an effective intervention in the east."¹⁹

He, therefore, spent some time travelling around in Persia working up support for the new style of Fāṭimid revolution that he proposed, independently of the older establishment in Egypt. By 1090 he was able to muster enough support to capture the isolated fortress of Alamūt, which his followers were to hold for nearly two centuries and from which he was able to launch his campaign.

The answer to the first part of the question is thus that the Ta'limiyyah are almost certainly to be identified as an activist cell of the Bāṭiniyyah in Persia, who adopted an even more authoritative hierarchical structure than their Egyptian counterparts and were prepared to use any methods to spread their domain of influence, including assassination. The fact that they were not eradicated for some time may be accounted for by their geographical isolation in the Alburz Mountains, by the impregnability of their fortress at Alamūt, and by the local support for them in Dailam.²⁰

According to one authority cited by Goldziher,²¹ the source of the ultra-authoritarian theology of the Ta'limiyyah was al-Ḥasan himself. While it is known that the Shī'Is as a whole placed considerable importance upon the role of the *Imām* and his communication of the "authoritative teaching" (*ta'lim*), with the Ta'limiyyah the source of this teaching as the person of their leader, al-Ḥasan (acting

19. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p. 79.

20. See EI2, "Alamūt," and Hodgson "The Ismā'īlī State," op. cit., pp. 430-32. For travellers' accounts see Stark, *The Valleys of the Assassins* (1934), and Willey, *The Castles of the Assassins* (1963). Alamūt means "Eagle's Nest".

21. Goldziher, *Streitschrift*, pp. 12 f., citing al-Shahrastānī.

as deputy of the hidden *Imām*), seems to have been a cardinal tenet of belief. Total obedience to him, at whatever cost, and total obedience to his interpretation of the Qur'ān constitute the main features of the *ta'lim*. The method of exegesis followed owed a great deal to Neoplatonism, so that with a virtually unrestricted range of ideas which formed the esoteric content of his message almost any symbol in the Qur'ān could be made to mean what he chose it to mean. According to Watt, in the Qur'ān "heaven and hell could be particular men".²² Other examples could be adduced but, because of the secret nature of their association, it is not easy to gain access to the literature of the Ta'limiyyah. What is evident so far is that al-Hasan's message was a "new preaching," as one heresiographer described it.²³

A convenient summary of the main points in al-Hasan's preaching has been provided by Hodgson.²⁴ He stressed, first, the division between the Muslims, on the one hand, and the philosophers, on the other, in stating that men need a teacher to know about ultimate truth. Secondly, he asserted that such a teacher must be authoritative, as against the Sunni position that any learned man would suffice. Thirdly, he asserted that the authority of the authoritative teacher must itself be demonstrated. Fourthly, such an authority is realised by the individual when he

²² Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p. 81. In later times Resurrection came to be the symbol of the new age, inaugurated in 1164 (Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," op. cit., pp. 457 f.).

²³ Al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa'l-Nihāl (Religions and Sects)*; see Appendix II.

²⁴ Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," op. cit., pp. 433-37. This chapter reflects Hodgson's later views on this question. See Appendix II for an important description of the preaching.

realises his need for the *Imām* and for his *ta'lim*. Hodgson comments that "as compared with the general Shī'ī notion of *ta'lim*, the more refined doctrine of *ta'lim* which Hasan presented was not only more rigorous logically but more self-sufficient. . . . The rigor and self-sufficiency of the doctrine were appropriate to the new sternness required of a movement in active and universal revolt".²⁵ Even if this new type of authoritative teacher was seen to teach "nothing but his own authority," what was required in such a situation was total loyalty to the movement of an "all-encompassing rebellion".²⁶

As will be seen, both in this treatise and in his autobiography,²⁷ al-Ghazālī certainly agrees with the premise that men need an authoritative teacher. His main line of attack, however, is to point to the logical inconsistencies of the Ismā'īlī position as a whole, together with the difficulties of consulting a hidden *Imām*, and to reply that the "authoritative teacher" which the Islamic community needs came in the person of Muḥammad. The proper use of the term *ta'lim* thus applies, in his view, to Muḥammad's teaching and to none other.²⁸

Al-Ghazālī himself expressed his intentions in writing *The Just Balance* in the following words:

"*The Just Balance* . . . is an independent work intended to show what is the standard by which knowledge is weigh-

²⁵ Ibid., p. 436.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 436, 437.

²⁷ *The Just Balance*, Chapter Eight; a summary of his argument against the Ta'limiyyah is given in Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 43-54.

²⁸ Compare Hodgson's discussion of al-Ghazālī's response in his *The Order of Assassins*, pp. 126-31, and the more extended treatment in Jabre, *La Notion de Certitude selon Ghazali*, Troisième Partie. For a critique of Jabre's position see Watt, "Study."

ed and how the man who has comprehended this has no need of an infallible *Imām*."²⁹

By "standard" here it will be seen that he means "form of argument". The physical analogy of weighing runs through the entire work and is elaborated at the outset. In the later chapters he likens various forms of argument to the different types of balance scales and derives various forms of the syllogism from the Qur'ān. There is thus a subsidiary theme of considerable importance in *The Just Balance*, a critique of the arguments commonly used in both theology and jurisprudence. In the course of pursuing this theme al-Ghazālī makes some important statements on the role of reason in Islam and defines the limits of personal opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*). A more general statement about the role of reason in Islam will be found in his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*,³⁰ where he argues that it should be used to elaborate and defend the articles of faith. His position corresponds to that established by Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, and later followed by some of the Christian Fathers. Reason is the "handmaid of faith" (*ancilla theologiae*).³¹ In contrast to the fundamentalist tendency of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Mālik, for whom literalism almost without exception was the only proper method,³² al-Ghazālī assigns a positive place to reason in Islam in this and

29. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 52.

30. See the book from this work, *The Book of Knowledge*, tr. Faris, p. 225, citing a *ḥadīth*: "The instrument of the believer is his intellect. . . . For everything there is a support, and the support of religion is the intellect." Al-Ghazālī attacks blind belief (*taqlīd*) in several passages.

31. Philo, *De Congressu*, 79-80; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, I, 28 f.

32. Al-Ghazālī, *The Foundations of the Articles of Faith*, tr. Faris, pp. 50-51, and Chapter Nine of the present work.

other works. *The Just Balance* should also be seen as one of his more important works on the philosophy of religion.

Authenticity and Dating of The Just Balance. There is little, if any, doubt that *The Just Balance* is an authentic work of al-Ghazālī. It is referred to in a number of other works which are unquestionably those of al-Ghazālī, it sustains the critique of the Bāṭiniyyah and the Ta'limiyyah which are to be found in these works, and it mentions other authentic works of his. The full evidence is given by Bouyges and Watt³³ and need not be further discussed here, except to indicate three of the sources in which *The Just Balance* is mentioned.³⁴

Dating *The Just Balance* is not such an easy task. As already stated, Watt believes it to have been written in the third of the four periods to which he assigns al-Ghazālī's works. Bouyges prefers to establish five periods in his life, but the number of works written during the first period before he became a professor was probably only two. Bouyges assigns this work to about the same time as does Watt, only leaving open the question whether it came at the end of this period or the beginning of the next.³⁵ The main point around which the chronology of the later works turns is the dating of the *Munqidh*, his autobiography. The key passage in this states that, at the time of writing, he was then more than fifty years old,³⁶ leading

33. Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie*, p. 57; Watt, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to Al-Ghazālī," op. cit., pp. 31, 44. See also Hourani, "The Chronology of Ghazālī's Writings," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXIX (1959), 225-33.

34. *Iljām, Fayṣal, Munqidh* (*Faith and Practice*, pp. 49, 52, 77).

35. See note 33.

36. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 20, with pp. 74 and 76.

Bouyges to date it between 1107 and 1109 (Watt suggests about 1108). As *The Just Balance* is mentioned several times in the *Munqidh*, and as at least two works were written between *The Just Balance* and the *Munqidh*, some time prior to 1106 seems to be the most likely date for *The Just Balance*. In the present state of our knowledge it is unlikely that the period of writing can be narrowed appreciably.

The Text

(a) Manuscripts

Full details of the manuscripts of *The Just Balance* are listed in the following:

- (1) C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, 2nd ed., I, 422. See item No. 28; *ibid.*, Supplementband I, p. 749, item 28.
- (2) 'Abdurrahmān Badawī, *Mu'allafāt al-Ghazālī*, pp. 160-65.
- (3) Al-Ghazālī, *al-Qistās al-Mustaqlm*, ed. Victor Chelhot, p. 40 (brief note) together with further information printed in the introduction to his translation (see below), p. 10.

According to Chelhot, the most ancient manuscript of the text now available is that of Kastamonu, dated 544 A.H. However, Badawī has given a description of a Cairo MS. (Dār al-Kutub, Taṣawwuf, 3609), dated 508 A.H. and thus written only three years after al-Ghazālī's death (op. cit., pp. 162-69).

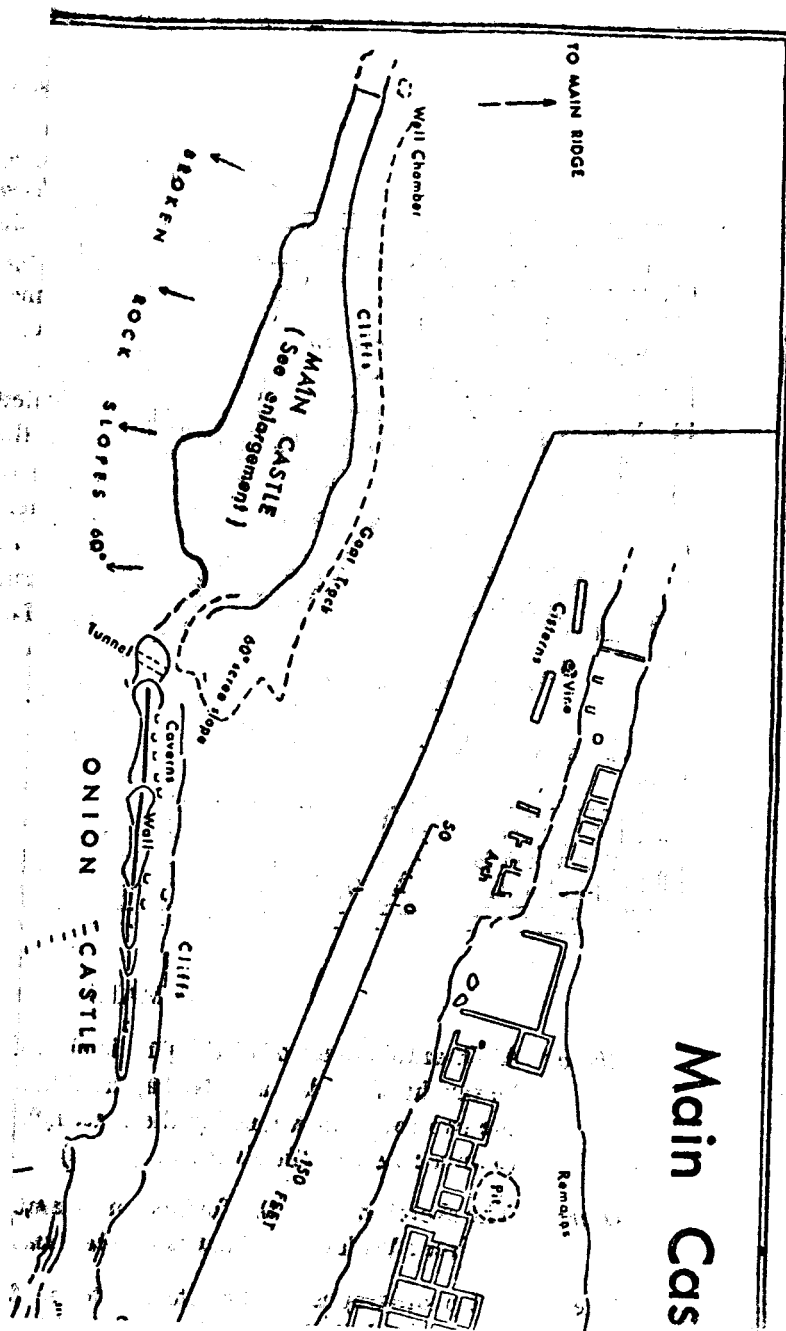
(b) Printed Texts

- (1) Cairo, 1318/1900, ed. M. Qabbānī
- (2) Cairo, 1353/1934, ed. M. al-Kurdy
- (3) Beirut, 1959, ed. Victor Chelhot

(c) Translations

- (1) Hebrew (Middle Ages)—Ibn Tibbon and others. Details in Badawī, op. cit., pp. 164-65.
- (2) French—Victor Chelhot: "*Al-Qistās al-Mustaqlm* et la Connaissance rationnelle chez Gazālī," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* de l'Institut Français de Damas, tome XV, 1955-57: Etude Preliminaire, pp. 7-37, La Traduction, pp. 39-88, Index des Termes Techniques, Chronologie de la Vie et des Oeuvres de Gazālī, Bibliographie, Table des Matieres.

This translation has been based on Chelhot's printed text of 1959. Chelhot states that his text was based on the printed text of Cairo, 1900, revised according to the readings of the MSS. of the Escorial and of Kastamonu. Where variations occur between these three "base texts," as Chelhot calls them, these have been noted in the Beirut text but have not been indicated in this translation. No indication is given by Chelhot as to the manuscript sources for the edition of 1900.



THE JUST BALANCE

*In the Name of God, the Merciful,
the Compassionate*

Chapter One

Introduction Concerning the Rules of Knowledge¹

First, I praise God and, secondly, I invoke blessings upon His most pure Messenger. My brothers, is there one of you who will give me his attention so that I may tell him of one of my meetings? One of the companions of the sect of the Ta'limiyyah² encountered me and surprised me by his questions and disputations, sprung upon me like one who performs wonders,³ and by his dazzling proofs. He said: I see that you claim to have perfect knowledge. With what rule of measurement⁴ do you assess the truth of know-

1. With the exception of the first, chapter headings are by al-Ghazālī.

2. Literally: "people of the authoritative teaching" (*ta'lim*).

3. Literally: "one who launches a challenge with a white hand," a reference to Moses; cf. Qur'ān, 7: 105, 20: 23, 26: 32, 27: 12, and 28: 32. It is a sign of God's power in Moses.

4. *Mizān* is translated "rule of measurement," a root whose basic meaning is "to weigh something".

ledge? With the rules of personal opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*)? These are the cause of extreme contradiction and equivocation, so that because of them dissension among men has broken out. Or with the rule of authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*)? In that case it would be binding on you to follow the *Imām*, the teacher, but I do not see you eager to search for him.⁵

I replied: May God protect me from the rules of personal opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*)! These are the rules of the Devil.⁶ If one of my friends claims that they are the rules of knowledge, I pray God that He will eliminate evil from His religion (*dīn*), for this is the religion of an ignorant friend and is worse than an intelligent enemy. If he were blessed with the felicity of the school of the true teaching (*ta'lim*),⁷ he would have been taught first the discussion of the Qur'ān, where God Most High says: "Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom (*ḥikmah*) and good admonition, and dispute with them in the better way."⁸ (The Qur'ān)⁹ teaches that a group of people is to be

5. The dramatic form of question and answer is used throughout and adds considerable interest to this work.

6. Arabic: Satan, translated throughout as "the Devil".

7. Al-Ghazālī contrasts the true *ta'lim* of Muḥammad with the incorrect view of *ta'lim* held by the Ta'limiyyah.

8. 16: 126. Palmer's and Arberry's translations of the Qur'ān have been consulted. Flügel's verse numbering is given.

9. Words in brackets are supplied by the translator.

summoned with wisdom, another group with good admonition, and another group with disputation.¹⁰

Wisdom, if fed to the people of admonition, does them harm, as a child which is suckling is harmed when fed with the flesh of birds. Disputation, when used with the people of wisdom, causes them disgust, as the adult feels when he is fed breast milk. And he who uses disputation with the people of disputation, but not in the best way as the Qur'ān teaches, is like the man who gives bread to the bedouin who is used to eating dates, or dates to the town-dweller who is used to eating bread. Would that this man had taken Abraham as a good example, who argued with his opponent saying: My Lord is the One Who gives life and causes to die.¹¹ When he saw that this (argument) did not suit his opponent and was not the best when the latter said: It is I who give life and cause to die, he reverted to that which was better suited to his nature and more intelligible to him. Abraham said: God makes the sun rise from the East, do you

10. Both al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd use this verse to establish three levels of approach to people. Compare Hourani, Tr., *Averroës On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*, p. 59 with p. 92, note 59. *Ḥikmah* has the specific meaning of "philosophical wisdom" in al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd, "admonition" is equivalent to oratory and rhetoric, while "disputation" is equivalent to dialectic.

11. See the story of Nimrūd below.

make it rise from the West. The unbeliever remained speechless. Abraham did not thus show his quarrel in order to verify Nimrūd's inability to raise the dead, for he knew that was beyond his ability to understand, as Nimrūd thought that killing was to cause death. Proving this was not suited to his (Nimrūd's) disposition and did not meet the limits of his insight or level (of understanding). For Abraham did not intend to destroy him but to give him life. To give someone food suitable for him is to give him life, but to insist obstinately on what is oppressive in not being suitable is to cause destruction. These are minutiae which cannot be grasped except with the light of the *ta'lim*¹² originating from the illumination of the world of prophecy. Thus they are deprived of understanding (the *ta'lim*) as they are deprived of its secret.¹³

He said: If you find their way rugged and their proof feeble, how will you assess their knowledge?¹⁴

I replied: With the aid of the Just Balance, to show myself its truth and its error, its correctness and its deviations, while following God Most High and the teaching of the Qur'ān given by the tongue of His true Prophet, as the Qur'ān

12. The true *ta'lim* is again intended here.

13. The antecedent to "they" is "the sect of the Ta'limiyyah."

14. Literally: "weigh their knowledge".

says: "And weigh with the straight balance."¹⁵

He said: What is the Just Balance?

I replied: The five rules of measurement which God has revealed in His Book and which He has taught His Prophets to use. Whoever learns from the Messengers of God and makes assessment with the rule of God is truly guided, while he who turns aside to opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*) errs and destroys himself.

He said: Where do you find this rule of measurement in the Qur'ān? Is this not but lies and calumny?

I said: Have you not heard the words of God in the Sūrah of the Merciful: "The All-Merciful has taught the Qur'ān. He created man and He has taught him the explanation" up to the words: "And heaven—He raised it up, and set the Balance. (Transgress not the Balance, and weigh with justice, and skimp not in the Balance)"¹⁶ Have you not heard the words of God in the Sūrah of Iron: "Indeed, We sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice."¹⁷ Do you believe that the

15. 17: 37. Al-Ghazālī's interpretation of this passage to suit his immediate purpose illuminates his methods. The context speaks of justice to the orphan and justice in the weighing of goods in trade.

16. 55: 2-7. Again, the context suggests just commercial practice rather than interpretative methods.

17. 57: 25.

balance which is associated with the Book is that balance used for wheat, barley, gold and silver? Do you imagine that the balance which is associated with the raising of the heavens in the passage: "And heaven—He raised it up, and set the balance"¹⁸ is the assay-balance for gold or the steelyard? This hypothesis is indeed wide of the mark and this calumny great! Fear God and do not commit wrongful interpretation (*ta'wil*). Know with certainty that this balance is the rule of measurement of the knowledge of God, of His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and of the worlds visible and invisible, in order that you may learn how to use it from the Prophets, as they learned from His angels. God Most High is the first teacher, Gabriel the second, and the Messenger (Muhammad) the third. All men learn from the Messengers (that) there is no method with regard to knowledge apart from it.

He said: How do you know whether this rule is true or false? With the aid of your intellect and perception? The minds of men contradict one another. Or with the aid of the true and infallible *Imām*, the one who maintains truth in the world? This is my school (of thought),¹⁹ to which I will summon men.

I replied: This also I know by *ta'lim*, but from

18. Recapitulation of 55: 6.

19. Arabic: *madhhab*, used of a school of law or theology.

the *Imām* of *Imāms*, Muhammad, the son of 'Abd Allāh, the son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. I have not seen him but I have heard his teaching (*ta'lim*), which has come to me in an unbroken chain of transmission in which there lies no doubt. This teaching is nothing other than the Qur'ān. The proof of the truth of the rules lies in the Qur'ān, known from the Qur'ān itself.

He said: Give me your proof and extract from the Qur'ān your rule of measurement. Show me how you have understood it and how you have understood its truth and veracity from the Qur'ān itself.

I replied: Give me your own proof. Tell me how you know the truth and integrity of the balance that weighs gold and silver. The knowledge of this is binding upon you when you have a debt so that you may repay it completely without any default, or when you are owed by another, in order that you may recover your credit with equity and without excess. If you enter a bazaar of the Muslims and take a balance in order to pay a debt or recover a credit, how do you know that you do not commit an injustice by default, in paying your debt, or by excess, in receiving your credit?

He said: I have every confidence in Muslims and I say that they do not begin to do business until they have adjusted their balances. If I

should have doubt about one of the balances, I take it and hang it up and examine the pans and the needle. If it hangs properly, so that the needle does not point to one side or the other, and I see that the pans are in equilibrium, then I know that it is a true and good balance.

I said: Tell me. If the needle is perpendicular and the pans are at the same level, how do you know that the balance is sound?

He said: I know this by necessary knowledge which comes from two prior facts, one of them experimental and the other deriving from the senses. The first is that I know by experiment that a heavy body falls; the faster, the heavier it is. So I say to myself: If one of the two pans were heavier it would be lower than the other. This is a universal fact of experience, known to me of necessity. The second is that in this very balance neither of the two pans is lower than the other—it is in a state of equilibrium. This is a prior fact known to me by the senses as my eye sees it. I entertain no doubt, neither in the fact of the senses, nor in the first, that of experience. There follows in my mind from these two prior facts the necessary conclusion that the balance is in equilibrium when I say: If one of the two (pans) were heavier it would be depressed; it is evident to the senses that it is not depressed; hence it is known that it is not

heavier.

I replied: This is opinion (*rā'y*) and rational analogy (*qiyās 'aqli*)!

He said: Far from it! This is a necessary knowledge. It follows from certain premises, which certainty is gained from experience and from the senses. How can it be opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*)? Analogy is an intuition and an appraisal which does not give certainty, while I feel this serene certainty.

I replied: If you know by this demonstration that the balance is just, how do you know that the weights are also just? It is possible that the weight is lighter or heavier than a true weight.

He said: If I have any doubt about this I may verify it by reference to a standard known to me. If they are equal, I know that the gold, if it is equal to my weight, is equal to my balance weight, for that which is equal to an equal is the same.²⁰

I asked him: Do you know who instituted the balance in the first place? He is the first, from whom you learn this method of weighing.

He replied: No. Whence do I have need (of this knowledge), when I know the soundness of the balance by the evidence of my eyes? I eat vegetables without asking about their pro-

²⁰ That is, two quantities which are both equal to a third are themselves equal.

venance. One does not seek out the originator of the balance for his own sake, but one seeks him out in order to learn from him the soundness of the balance and how to make use of it. I have already learned this, as I have recounted and explained, hence I have no need to consult the originator of the balance at every weighing. That would take too long, and one would not succeed on every occasion. Besides, I do not need to.

I said : If I bring you a balance concerning knowledge like this one and sounder than it, and to this I add the fact that I know its author, the one who teaches (how to use it) and who uses it—its originator being God Himself, its teacher being Gabriel, and the one who uses it being Abraham, as well as Muḥammad and the other Prophets, God having borne witness of their veracity—would you accept this from me and would you believe in it?

He said : Yes, by God ! How could I not do so, if it is as clear as you have told me?

I said : I recognise in you the signs of intelligence. My hope is sound that I may put you on the right path and make you understand the true nature of your school of thought and your teaching (*ta'lim*). I will unveil to you the five rules of measurement revealed in the Qur'ān, so that you may dispense with all *Imāms* and go

beyond the level of the blind. Your (true) *Imām* shall be Muḥammad, your guide shall be the Qur'ān, and your touchstone shall be what your eye beholds. Understand that there are three rules in the Qur'ān, fundamentally: the Rule of Equivalence, the Rule of Concomitance, and the Rule of Opposition. The first, the Rule of Equivalence, is divided into three: the Great, the Middle, and the Small. This makes five in all.²¹

21. As will be seen, these are the first three forms of the categorical syllogism, the conjunctive syllogism and the disjunctive syllogism.

Chapter Two

The Great Rule of Equivalence

Then this intelligent member of the people of authoritative teaching (*ta'lim*) said to me: Explain to me the Great Rule of Equivalence first, as well as the meaning of these names, Equivalence, Concomitance, and Opposition, the Great, the Middle, and the Small. These names are strange, and I have no doubt that they cover things which are subtle.

I replied: As for the names, you will not understand them until after they are explained and their meaning is understood. Then you will grasp the relationship between the name and the realities which it designates.

First of all, I am going to teach you that this balance resembles that of which I have spoken in meaning but not in form. For it is a "balance" for thought¹ and is certainly not the same as a material balance. Whence does it follow that it should be, when even material balances differ between themselves? In effect, the Roman balance² is one type and the assay-balance is another. The astrolabe is a balance for measur-

1. Literally: "a spiritual balance".

2. See below.

ing the movements of stars, the rule is a balance for measuring linear distances, while the plumb line is a balance for verifying the perpendicularity and curvature of a building. All these "balances," even though their forms may differ, share one thing, the property of showing where there is excess or deficiency. Metre is itself the balance of poetry, by which the measures of poetry are known and the faulty verses are distinguished from the regular. It is the most spiritual of the material balances, but is not entirely separated from the attachments of matter, for it measures sounds, and sound is inseparable from the body. The most spiritual of the balances is that of the Day of Judgment. It measures actions, beliefs, and the knowledge of the believers. Now knowledge and faith have no attachment to matter. For this reason the balance of the Day of Judgment is the most spiritual.

In the same way, the balance of the Qur'ān for knowledge is spiritual. But its definition is linked, in the visible world, with an envelope which is tied to matter, even if it itself is not matter. In this world the communication of something to someone else is not possible except through face-to-face contact, that is, through sounds which are material, or through writing, that is, by means of characters written on the surface of a paper, which itself is material. This

is the law of its envelope, the way in which it is presented. As for the Rule itself, it is spiritual, without any attachment to matter since by it is measured our knowledge of God, which knowledge is external to the world of senses. God is too Holy to comprise directions and dimensions, even less could He be a body. (This balance), in spite of what we have said, has an arm and two pans. The pans are suspended from the arm, and the arm is common to the two pans as each of them is tied to it. This is the Rule of Equivalence. The Rule of Concomitance is more like the Roman balance since it has but a single pan, but on the other side there is opposed the spherical ball which shows the differences and measures the weight.

He said: This is a great noise! But what does it all mean? I hear the clacking of the mill, but I do not see any flour!³

I replied: Have patience! "And hasten not with the Qur'ān ere its revelation is accomplished unto thee; and say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge'."⁴ Understand that haste comes from the Devil and circumspection comes from God!

You should know that the Great Rule is that

3. According to Chelhot, citing the edition of 1900, this is an Arabic proverb which is used against a man who says much but does little, or who promises something but completes nothing.

4. 20; 113, a rebuke for his haste.

of Abraham, who employed it against Nimrūd.⁵ It is from Abraham that we know it, through the mediation of the Qur'ān. Nimrūd claimed divinity. Now "God," by agreement, is an expression denoting Him Who has power over all things. Abraham said: It is God Who is my God, in that He is the One Who gives life and causes to die. He is able to do this, while you are incapable of doing so. Nimrūd replied: I am able to give life and to cause death. By this he meant that he was able to give life by procreation and to cause death by killing. Abraham knew that it would be difficult to convince Nimrūd of his error, so he reverted to that which was clearer to Nimrūd: God makes the sun rise from the East. Do you make it rise from the West! The unbeliever was silenced. God praised Abraham, saying: "This is Our proof which We have given to Abraham against his people."⁶

I understand from this that the proof and demonstration lie in the words of Abraham and his method of measurement. I considered his method just as you have considered the weighing of gold and silver coins. I saw that in this proof there are two premises which are combined so as to lead to a conclusion which is known,

5. For Nimrūd see Qur'ān, 2: 260 f., from which the quotations in the earlier part of the argument are taken.

6. Qur'ān, 6: 84.

based upon the Qur'ān in a way which is clever and inimitable.

The perfection of the form of this method is that we say: Whoever is able to make the sun rise is God—this is the first premise. My God is able to perform this—this is the second premise. It necessarily follows from the combination of these two premises that my God is God and not yours, Nimrūd.

Reflect now. Is it possible for someone to consider these two premises and then to doubt the conclusion? Or, again, can one imagine that one entertains doubt about these premises? Certainly not! For our statement: God is He Who is able to raise the sun, contains no doubt; in that for them (the Ta'limiyyah) and for everyone the term "God" denotes Him Who is All-Powerful, which includes among other things the power to make the sun rise. This premise is known by convention and by common agreement. Our proposition: It is God Who has the power to make the sun rise and not you, is known by examination. The inability of Nimrūd and the inability of everyone else, apart from Him Who makes the sun move, is known by the senses. By the term "God," then, we mean Him Who moves the sun and makes it rise. Thus, it follows from the knowledge of the first premise, known from the convention accepted by all, and from the

second premise, known by examination, that Nimrūd is not God and that God alone is most exalted. Reflect for a moment. Do you not see that this is more evident than the principles of experiment and those of the senses, which are the bases for the weighing of gold?

He replied: This knowledge follows necessarily, and it is not possible for me to doubt these premises or the conclusion which follows from them. However, this procedure is of value to me only on this question and according to the way in which Abraham used it to deny the divinity of Nimrūd and to establish the divinity of Him Who alone is able to make the sun rise. How may I use it to determine other matters on which I have doubt, and on which I need to distinguish the true from the false?

I said: Whoever weighs gold with a balance may also weigh money with it and other precious objects. The process of weighing gives information about its mass, not because it is gold, but because it has a mass. So this demonstration has shown us this knowledge, not because of its essential quality, but because it is a truth and a meaning among others. Let us consider why this conclusion has followed from this argument and, taking its spirit, let us discard this particular form so that we may use the argument where we wish.

This argument follows only because "The judgment on the attribute necessarily applies to the matter described (the subject)." In order to show this, here is the argument involved: My Lord makes the sun rise; the one who makes the sun rise is God; hence it follows that my Lord is God. Now, "He Who makes the sun rise" is an attribute of the Lord. We judge, that is, that "He Who makes the sun rise" is an attribute of divinity. From this it follows that my Lord has the attribute of divinity. The same follows whenever I attain knowledge of one attribute, and attain a second item of knowledge enabling me to pass judgment on this attribute. There follows necessarily for me a third point by the establishment of judgment concerning what is described.

He replied: This is almost too subtle for me to understand. If I doubt this, what can I do to remove my doubt?

I said: Take the standard which is known to you, as you did in weighing the gold and the money.

He replied: How should I do this? In this question, where is the standard?

I said: The standard lies in the first principles which are necessary, whether derived from the senses or from experience or from the intellect. Reflect on the first principles. Can you picture a situation where judgment is established

about the attribute without that judgment extending to the subject described? If, for example, an animal with a distended stomach walks in front of you and it is a mule. Someone says: It is pregnant. You say: Do you not know that the mule as a class is sterile and does not give birth? He replies: Certainly, I know this by experience. You reply: Do you know that this animal is a mule? He looks and then replies: Certainly. I ascertain this by the senses and by sight. You reply: Now, do you know that this animal is not pregnant? He cannot doubt this after a knowledge of the two premises, those of experience and the senses. The knowledge that it is not pregnant is necessary and follows from the two previous items of knowledge. It follows as does your knowledge of weighing from experiment in that "what is weighed depresses the balance," and the senses inform you: "that one of the two pans of the balance does not sink lower by comparison with the other".

He replied: I have understood all this clearly, but what is not clear to me is the statement: "The judgment given on the attribute necessarily applies to the subject described."

I replied: Reflect on your proposition "This is a mule," which is the attribution; and the description "mule". Your proposition states: "Every mule is sterile," declaring that the attribute

“mule” denotes sterility. It then follows that the judgment “sterile” applies to animals denoted by the class “mule”. In the same way, it is evident to you that all animals possess sensory perception, and that the worm is an animal. You cannot doubt that it therefore possesses sensory perception. The style of your argument is as follows:

All worms are animals.

All animals possess sensory perception.

Therefore all worms possess sensory perception.

This is so because, in saying “All worms are animals,” you give a description of the worm, declaring it to be an animal. Its attribute is “animal”. Thus, when you judge that animals possess sensory perception, or have bodies, or whatever else, you without question place the worm in this category. This must necessarily be so, and there cannot be any doubt about it. Yes, indeed, but the condition for this is that the attribute must be equal to or more general than the subject so described, so that the judgment expressed encompasses it of necessity.⁷

To give another example from jurisprudence, whoever admits that wine is an intoxicant, and that all intoxicants are forbidden, cannot doubt

7. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I, 1, 24b, 28 and I, 4, 25b, 32.

that wine is forbidden.⁸ For the term “intoxicant” is an attribute of wine, and the judgment expressed concerning prohibition must necessarily include wine, since it is without doubt included in what is described. This is so in all cases on which there is speculation.

He said : I am compelled from this to understand that the union of two premises in this way leads to a necessary conclusion, and that Abraham’s demonstrative proof is sound and his method of measurement is true. Further, I have learned his principle of deduction and its proper character, and I have learned its standard of assessment from my criteria. However, I would like an example in order to be able to apply this method of measurement to aspects of knowledge which are problematic, for these examples have been clear in themselves, not needing measurement or demonstrative proof.

I said : Indeed not ! Some of these examples are far from clear in themselves. Rather, they result from the combination of two premises. For no one knows this animal to be sterile except he who knows by sensory perception that it is a mule, and, secondly, by experience that mules do

8. The problem at issue is that of defining an intoxicant. The Qur’anic texts relevant are 16 : 69, 2 : 216, 4 : 46 and 5 : 99. Examples of Qur’anic exegesis on this question are given in Gatje, *The Qur’an and Its Exegesis*, pp. 200-09.

not give birth. Only the first proposition is clear. That which is derived from the union of two premises has, so to speak, a father and a mother, and it is not of itself clear but has need of something else. In some cases this something else, that is the two premises, may be clear after experience and the use of sight. Thus the fact that wine is forbidden is not of itself clear but results from the two premises. The first is that it is intoxicating, which is known by experience. The second is that all intoxicants are forbidden, which comes to us from the Legislator, Muhammad. This example tells you how to employ this method of measurement and how to make use of it. If you wish to have an example which is more obscure than this, there are an unlimited number of others. Indeed, thanks to this example, we can assess most of the obscure cases. Let us, however, take but one.

Among these obscure cases is the fact that man does not appear of himself—he has a cause and a Creator. The same applies to the world. If we revert to our rule of measurement we know that he has a Creator and that this Creator is knowledgeable. Hence we say, in effect: All that is possible has a cause; the specification of the world and of man in their proper proportions is possible; hence, it follows from this that they have a cause. Whoever knows and recognises

these two premises cannot doubt the conclusion which follows. If you doubt these premises, then you must establish their conclusion from two other premises which are evident, until you ultimately arrive at first principles which you cannot doubt. Thus the sciences which are evident and primary are the bases for those which are obscure and hidden. They are their seed. However, only the man who possesses the skill of sowing and ploughing may bring them to fruit by the union of the two premises.

If you say: I even doubt the two premises, then why do you say that all that is possible has a cause? And why do you say that the specification of man in his proper proportions is possible but not necessary? To this I reply: My proposition that all that is possible has a cause is evident when you understand the meaning of the term "possible". By this I understand that which hovers between two equal divisions. If two things are equal, then neither of them of itself can opt for existence or non-existence, for of necessity that which is necessary for one must be necessary for the other also. This is the first consideration. As for my statement that the specification of man as such a quantity is possible and not necessary, this is similar to my statement that the line which is drawn by a scribe with a given length is possible since the line as such is not given an

exact length, but one can imagine one that is longer or shorter. Its specification, whether longer or shorter, is without doubt due to a cause, since the line is susceptible of being either. This is certainly necessary. In the same way one may assign one dimension as well as another to man and his limits. If these are prescribed, then there must be an agent who has done so.

From this I proceed to say that man's agent must be knowledgeable. For every action which is judged to be proper must be attributed to an agent who is knowledgeable. Now, one cannot escape the inference that the structure of man is well ordered. Hence we must attribute his ordering to the knowledge of the agent. Here we have two premises, and if we recognise these, we cannot doubt the conclusion. The first premise is that the body of man is well ordered. This we know by examining his members, each of which is intended for a particular purpose, such as the hands for fighting and the feet for marching.⁹ The knowledge gained by dissection of the members of the body provides necessary evidence of this. Further, it is also evident that that which is well arranged requires knowledge. An intelligent man cannot doubt that beautiful writing can come only from one who knows how to

9. Compare Watt, *Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, p. 31, and Abū Zayd, *Al-Ghazālī On Divine Predicates*, pp. 1-2.

write, even if the means to this be a pen which cannot know, and that the construction of something to provide shelter, such as a house, baths, a mill, and other things, can come only from one who knows about building.

If you entertain doubt about something here, then our way forward at this point is to rise to something more evident, until we reach first principles. We do not intend to explain this point. Rather, our intention has been to show that the union of first principles, as employed by Abraham, is a just method of measurement which gives true knowledge. No one can gainsay this, for this would be to gainsay the teaching of God to His Prophets, and to gainsay the revelation which He has given in the words: "This is Our proof which We have given to Abraham against his people."¹⁰ The teaching (i.e. the *ta'lim* of Muḥammad) is true without question, even if speculation (*rā'y*) is not true. To gainsay these, that is *both* *rā'y* and *ta'lim*, is done by no one.¹¹

10. 6: 84.

11. For further discussion of these, see Chapter Seven.

Chapter Three

The Middle Rule of Measurement

He said : I have understood the Great Rule, its principle of deduction, its means of assessment, its object, and the way to use it. Explain to me the Middle Rule of measurement ; what is it ? whence does its teaching derive ? who has laid it down ? and who has made use of it ?

I replied ; It also was used by Abraham in the saying : "I love not those stars that set."¹ Its complete form is this :

The moon sets.

God does not set.

Hence the moon is not God.

Its foundation comes from the Qur'ān in a manner which is concise and inclusive. The knowledge that denies divinity to the moon comes of necessity by way of two premises. These are that the moon sets, and that God does not set. When the two premises are known, then there necessarily comes the knowledge that denies divinity to the moon.

He replied : I do not doubt that denying divinity to the moon follows from these two premises, once understood. However, I know by the

1. Qur'ān, 6 : 76.

The Middle Rule of Measurement

senses that the moon sets, but I do not know by necessity nor by the senses that God does not set.

I replied : It is not my intention, in discussing this rule of measurement, to inform you that the moon is not God, but to show you that this way of measurement is sound, and that the knowledge gained by it is necessary. Abraham gained this knowledge truly only when he knew that God does not set, and that for him this was not primary knowledge but was derived from two other premises through which it was deduced that God does not change. For all that changes is created, and, in effect, setting is change. The rule of measurement was based upon that which was known to him. Take this rule of measurement and use it wherever you have attained knowledge of two premises.

He said : I have necessarily understood that this rule of measurement is sound, and this knowledge must follow from these two premises, once they are known. However, I desire that you should explain to me the principle of deduction and its truth, then the standard by which it may be applied to a case known to me. Further, I would like an example of its use in the case of difficult subjects, for the denial of divinity to the moon is obvious to me.

I replied : Here is the principle of deduction.

There are two things which are alike but as one has an attribute which the other does not have they must be different. Put in another way, one of the two things denies its own attribute of the other and does not have the other's attribute. Given that the chief rule of deduction states that the judgment applied to the more general is also the judgment applied to the more specific case, without question, the principle in this case is that if one denies an attribute to one thing while affirming it of another then the first must be different from the second.² Thus, "disappearance" is denied of God but affirmed of the moon. This necessarily implies that God and the moon are distinct from one another, that the moon is not God, nor God the moon.

God has taught his Prophet Muḥammad to use this rule in many places in the Qur'ān, after the example of his father Abraham. Here I will content myself with two examples; you may seek the rest in the verses of the Qur'ān. The first is the saying of God to His Prophet: "Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins?"³ Nay, ye are mortals of those whom He has created!"⁴ This was because they claimed to be sons of God.

2. See Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I, 5, 26b, 34.

3. The reference is to the Jews and Christians claiming to be the sons of God.

4. 5: 21.

Muḥammad taught how to expose their error by means of the Just Balance, saying: "Say: Why then does He punish you for your sins?" The complete rule of measurement is as follows:

Children are not punished.

You are punished.

Hence you cannot be the children (of God). There are two premises here, of which the first is that children are not punished, which is known by experience. The second is that you are punished, which is known by sight. It necessarily follows from these premises that you are not children (of God).

The second example is the saying of God: "Say: O ye who are Jews! if ye pretend that ye are the clients of God,⁵ beyond other people; then wish for death if ye do speak the truth. But they never wish for it."⁶ This was because they claimed to be the clients (of God). It is well known that the client desires to meet his Master, and it is also well known that they do not desire death, which is the cause of their meeting Him. It necessarily follows from this that they are not the clients of God. The complete form of measurement is this:

5. The word "client" here has a wider interpretation and may mean "friend" (of God) in this context also, or "close companion". In mystical contexts it may mean "lover" (of God).

6. 62: 6-7.

Every client desires to meet his Master.
The Jews do not desire to meet God.
Hence it follows that they are not clients of God.

The principle of deduction is this: the desire (to meet God) is predicated of the client but denied to the Jews. Hence the client is not a Jew, nor is the Jew a client (of God).

This standard is clear so that I do not think that you need to clarify it with the aid of a known example. However, if you wish for clarification, consider the following: You know that a stone is mineral and that man is not mineral, but do you necessarily know that man is not mineral? It follows because the attribute "mineral" is affirmed of the stone and denied to man, there is no question but that "man" is excluded from "stone" and "stone" from "man". Thus man is not stone, nor stone man.

The ways in which this rule may be used in doubtful cases are many. One of the two conditions of knowledge is the knowledge of the sanctity, that is to say, the sanctity which makes God separate from all else. All knowledge of God is measured by this rule. For Abraham made use of it concerning the sanctity of God, and taught us how to use it, since by its means he denied that God had corporeality. Thus:

God is not a substance which is in one place,

for God is not caused.

All things which are confined to one place are caused, because they are specified thus.

It follows that God is not a substance.

We also say:

God is not an accident, because an accident is neither living nor knowing.

God is living and knowing.

Thus He is not an accident.

Thus all the other aspects of God's sanctity also lead to knowledge by the application of these premises in this manner. The first of these premises is negative, implying exclusion, while the second is positive, implying affirmation. From these there follows that which is denied (of God) and which establishes His sanctity (apart from all else).

Chapter Four

The Small Rule of Measurement

He said : I have understood this clearly and of necessity. Now, explain to me the Small Rule, its principle, its standard, and the way of using it in doubtful cases.

I said : The Small Rule was taught us when God instructed Muḥammad in the Qur'ān thus : "They do not prize God at His true worth when they say : 'God has never revealed anything to a mortal.' Say : 'Who revealed the Book wherewith Moses came, a light and a guidance unto men ?'".¹ The manner of applying this rule is to say : Their denial of the revelation given to man is a proposition which does not follow from the union of two premises. The first of these is that Moses is a man, and second is that Moses was given the Scripture. It is necessary to establish a specific decree, which is that some men have received the Scripture. By means of this decree we revoke the general proposition that no Scripture has ever been sent to any man. The first premise is our statement : Moses is a man, which is known by the senses. The second premise is that Moses was given the Scripture, which is known because the

1. 6 : 92.

The Small Rule of Measurement

Jews recognise it, since they have hidden a part of Scripture and have shown forth a part of it, as God has said : "Ye show (it), though ye hide much."² This is mentioned by God as the best method of dialectical argument. It is the characteristic of dialectic that it contains but two premises which are admitted by the opponent and recognised by him, even though others may doubt them. This proof binds your opponent, given that he recognises them. The greater number of proofs from the Qur'ān follow in this manner. If it happens that you doubt some of the premises and their antecedents, understand that the aim of this method is to provide a proof for him who entertains no doubt. For your part, your aim should be to learn how to make use of this way in all other cases.

Here is the method of assessing this rule. If someone says : "One cannot conceive that an animal should move without legs," he will be corrected when you say : "The snake is an animal and moves without legs." It follows from this that some animals move without having legs, and that the statement : "Animals move only with legs," is a false and contradictory statement.

There are many ways in which this rule is used in obscure cases. If some people say : "Every lie

2. Ibid. That is, the Jews are accused of concealing parts of their Scriptures in discussions with Muḥammad. See Ibn Hishām (Tr. A. Guillaume), *The Life of Muḥammad*, pp. 260-65.

is wrong in itself," we should reply: "Who has seen one of the friends (of God) who has hidden himself from a tyrant? This tyrant asks where he is, but it is concealed—is this a lie?" He replies: "Yes." We say: "Is it wrong?" He replies: "No. Indeed, the wrong would lie in the truthfulness which would lead to his destruction." We say, then, to this man: "Consider the rule. We say that the concealment of the friend's hiding place is a lie—this is a known premise. This statement is not evil—this is the second premise. It follows from this that not every lie is wrong. Reflect for a moment. Is it conceivable that there should be doubt in this demonstration once these two premises are recognised? Is this not more evident than the premises gained by experience and the senses that I have cited with regard to knowledge of the rule concerning the sanctity of God?"

Here is the definition of this rule. If two descriptions apply to one object, it is essential that some aspects of one of the two should be included in the other, but it is not necessary that it be totally included.³ On the contrary, it may in some cases be totally included, and in other cases not. There is no firm rule. Do you not see that man is described as "living" and as "body"? It must follow from this that some bodies are living, but it does not follow that every body is living. Do

3. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, I, 6, 28a, 10.

not be misled into saying that every animal is a body. If it does not necessarily follow that attributes can be thus interchanged, neither does knowledge follow in this way of necessity.

My interlocutor may now say: I have understood these three rules. But why have you described the first as Great, the second as Middle and the third as Small?

I reply: Because the Great Rule applies to the majority of cases, the Small applies to but a few, while the Middle applies accordingly. The Great is the most widely applicable, since it is possible to make use of it to gain knowledge of general affirmations and specific affirmations, and to make general denials and specific denials.⁴ Thus it is possible to obtain four sorts of knowledge by means of it. The second type can produce only a denial, but of both sorts, that is a general denial and a specific denial.⁵ The third type can give only a particular denial, as I have said. It follows from this rule that one aspect of one attribute is included in the other, since they both apply to one thing. That which applies only to a special and partial case is certainly small.⁶ Without doubt, to make use of this to make general judgments is one of the rules of the Devil! The party of *ta'lim* have made use of it in order to

4. Ibid., I, 4, 26b, 29.

5. Ibid., I, 5, 28a, 8.

6. Ibid., I, 6, 29a, 16.

The Just Balance

gain some of their knowledge. The Devil suggested it to Abraham in the saying: "This is my Lord, this is greater." I will narrate this story to you later on.

Chapter Five

The Rule of Concomitance

He said : Expound to me the Rule of Concomitance. I have understood the three divisions of the Rule of Equivalence.

I replied : This rule is taken from the words of God : "If there were gods other than God, both (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin."¹ And from the passage : "Say : If there had been other gods with Him, as they say, in that case assuredly they would have sought a way unto the Lord of the Throne."² And from the passage : "If those (false gods) had been gods, they would never have gone down (to Gehenna)."³ The form of this rule is established by saying : If the world had two gods, it would surely go to ruin—this is the first premise. Now it is known that it has not gone to ruin—this is the second premise. From these premises the conclusion must of necessity follow, that is, the denial of two gods. Since, if there were with the possessor of Throne other gods, they would have to find a way to the possessor of the Throne, and since it is known that they have not found such a way, the denial of gods other than the possessor of the Throne

1. 21 : 21.

2. 17 : 44.

3. 21 : 99.

must follow.

Here is the way in which this rule may be verified with a known example. You say: "If the sun is risen, the stars are hidden—this is known by experience." Then you say: "It is known by the senses that the sun is risen, therefore it follows that the stars are hidden." You will say: "If someone eats he is satiated—this is known by experience." Then you say: "It is known that he eats—this is known by the senses. It follows from the premise of experience and the premise of the senses that he is satisfied."

There are many ways of using this argument in obscure cases, so that the jurist says: "Supposing that the sale of an absent object is sound (in law), it follows that such a sale is binding (on the vendor) because the obligation is made clear. Now it is known that the obligation is not made clear. Hence it is concluded that the sale is not sound."⁴ The first premise is known by taking examples in jurisprudence, giving an opinion but not knowledge. The second premise is known by the admission of your adversary and by his aid.

In the sphere of intellectual argument we say: "If the making of the world and the human domain is indeed beyond wonder, then its maker must be knowing. This is the first step according to reason. Now, it is known that the world is

4. It is not, in fact, sound in Islamic law.

strikingly well ordered, as is perceived by the eye. It follows from this that its maker is knowing." Then you go a step higher and say: "If its maker is knowing, He must also be living. Now it is known that He is knowing, by the first rule. Hence it follows from this that He must be living." Then you say: "If He is living and knowing, then he must be self-subsistent and not an accident. Now it is known from the previous two rules that He is living and knowing. Hence He must be self-subsistent." Thus we ascend from the ordering of the human domain to the description of its maker, which is knowledge; then again we ascend from knowledge to life, and from thence to the essence. This is the spiritual ascension, and these rules are the steps by which to ascend to the skies, even further, to the Maker of the skies, and these principles are the stages of the ascent. As for bodily ascension, no power is sufficient for this, save that which is reserved for the Prophet.⁵

Here, now, is the definition of this rule. Everything which applies to something must follow for it in every condition. It follows also that the denial of something (to an entity) necessitates a (similar) denial to that which depends upon that

5. A reference here to the miraculous ascension of Muḥammad, in Arabic *mi'raj*. For an account of this, see Ibn Hishām (Tr. A. Guillaume), *The Life of Muḥammad*, pp. 184-87.

entity, and the affirmation of something which depends upon the entity necessitates the existence of that entity. That the subsequent effect may be denied while the entity itself is affirmed gives no conclusion, and is again one of the works of the Devil, used by some of the Ta'limiyyah to provide their knowledge.

Do you not perceive that for prayer to be valid it follows that he who prays must be purified? There is no doubt that it is true to say: "If the prayer of Zaid is to be valid, he must be purified; it is known that he is not purified, which is the negation of the required condition; it follows that his prayer is not valid and this is the denial of what is conditioned."⁶ In the same way you say: "It is known that his prayer is valid, showing the existence of the required condition; it thus follows that he is purified, showing the existence of the antecedent condition." But if you were to say: "It is known that he is purified, it thus follows that his prayer is valid," this would be false for it may be that his prayer was invalidated for another reason. This would show the existence of the anterior condition but would not show the existence of that which follows. Again, if you were to say: "It is known that his prayer

6. The purification referred to is the ritual ablution before the statutory prayer rite (*ṣalāt*), Zaid is the Arab equivalent of the hypothetical John Smith.

was not valid, hence he was not purified," this would not necessarily imply an error (for it may be that the invalidity proceeded from another source).

Chapter Six

The Rule of Opposition

Then he said : Explain to me the Rule of Opposition ; show me where it occurs in the Qur'ān ; how to verify it, and how to use it.

I said : Its place in the Qur'ān is given in God's teaching to Muḥammad : "Say : Who provides for you out of the heavens and the earth ? Say : God. Surely, either we or you are upon right guidance, or in manifest error."¹ God does not mention "we or you" in this passage as being objects of comparison or of doubt. Another principle is to be understood here, that is, that we are not in error in saying : "God provides for you out of the heavens and the earth." It is He Who provides from the heavens by sending the rain, and on the earth by the sprouting of crops. Thus you err in denying this. Here is the complete form of the syllogism : Either we or you are in manifest error—this is the first premise. Then we say : It is known that we are not in error—this is the second premise. It must follow necessarily from the combination of the two premises that the conclusion is that you are in error.

The verification of this demonstration is

1. 34 : 23.

The Rule of Opposition

known and is as follows. Supposing that someone goes into a house in which there are only two rooms. Then we enter but do not see him. We know with certainty that he must necessarily be in the other room. We have here the union of two premises. The first is that he is certainly in one of the two rooms. The second is that undoubtedly he is not in this one. It follows that he must be in the second room. In this manner we know that he is in the second room, sometimes seeing him in it and on other occasions seeing the other room empty. In the first of these two ways we see him and gain this knowledge through our eyes. In the second case we do not see him and gain knowledge through the use of this rule, by deduction which provides knowledge as certain as through the use of our eyes.

The definition of this rule is as follows. If something may be found under two divisions (or categories), it follows that the affirmation that it is to be found in one must involve the denial that it is to be found under the other, and conversely so. The condition for this is that the divisions (or categories) are well defined and are not extended.² Using categories which are extended is a device of the Devil and this is a custom of some

2. That is to say, in the first case there is a complete disjunction between the categories, while in the second the disjunction is incomplete.

of the Ta'limiyyah, used by them in many places, as we have mentioned in our books *Qawāsim Jawāb Mufaṣṣal al-Khalāf*, and *Mustazhiri*, and elsewhere.

The number of obscure cases in which this rule may be used is without limit and it may form the basis for most rational discussions. For example, someone may deny the existence of an eternal Being. We, therefore, say to him: "Existing things are either created, or some of them are created and some of them are eternal." This is disjunctive, for it hinges upon the difference between denial and affirmation.³ Thus we say: "Now it is known that not everything is created; it follows that some things must be eternal." If your opponent now says: "Why do you say that not everything is created?", we reply: "Because if all things were in fact created, they would have come into existence of themselves, without a cause. It is thus false to say that they are all eternal, and it is established that amongst them there must be an eternal Being." The rational discussions in which this rule may be used are numberless.

He said: I have truly understood that these five rules are sound. However, I would like to know the meaning of their names and why the

3. Compare the discussion in Rescher, *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics*, pp. 77-80.

first is specified as the Rule of Equivalence, the second as the Rule of Concomitance, and the third as the Rule of Opposition.

I replied: I have called the first the Rule of Equivalence because it comprises two equal premises, as though they were two pans of a balance in equilibrium. The second I have called the Rule of Concomitance because one of the two premises comprises two parts, one of which follows necessarily and the other depends upon it, as in the saying of the Qur'ān: "If there were gods other than God, both (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin."⁴ The phrase: "They would surely go to ruin" is the prior condition while the phrase "If there were gods other than God" follows from the prior condition. The conclusion follows from the denial of the prior condition. The third rule is named the Rule of Opposition because it stems from the division into two categories, affirmation and denial, maintaining one of which entails the denial of the other, and the converse. It is clear that there is opposition and contrast between the two categories.

He said: Did you invent these names (for the rules) and did you extract them (from the Qur'ān), or were there others who preceded you?

I replied: As far as the names are concerned I did indeed invent them. I also extracted the

4. 21 : 21.

rules from the Qur'ān and I do not believe that others preceded me in doing so. However, I have been preceded by others in the elaboration of the principles of the rules. They are to be found amongst the more recent (authorities) with names other than those I have given. These rules also have other names with some of the peoples who preceded the coming of Muḥammad and Jesus, who had themselves taken them from the books of Abraham and Moses.⁵

However, I have been led to reclothe these rules with different names, as I know that you understand them with difficulty and are a slave of your imaginings. Indeed, I see that you are so mistaken by appearances that were someone to give you red honey to drink in a cupping-glass you would not be able to bring yourself to take it because of your revulsion to the cupping-glass, and because your intellect is too weak to see that the honey is pure in whatever receptacle it may come. Indeed, were you to see a Turk dressed in a patched cloak and a woollen shift,⁶ you would judge him to be a *ṣūfī* or a jurisprudent, and if you were to see a *ṣūfī* dressed in caftan and cap, you would imagine that he was a Turk. Your

5. Al-Ghazālī thus emphasises the Qur'ānic basis of his system of thought in deriving them from the Qur'ān and in giving them different names. See Appendix III.

6. For the details of the patched cloak and woollen shift with a slit down the front, see Massignon, *Passion* (1st ed.), pp. 49-50.

imagination only allows you to see the externals, and not the heart of things. For this reason you do not look at a saying for its own sake, but only look at its elegant construction or the good opinion you have of him who utters it. If its form is disagreeable to you, or the one who utters it is hateful in your estimation, you reject the saying, even though it may be true in itself. If, again, someone were to say to you : "Say : There is no god but God, and Jesus is the Messenger of God," you would be repelled by this and would reply : "This is a statement from the Christians. How could I say this ?" You would not have the intelligence to know that in itself this statement is true and that the Christian is hateful not because of this statement, nor for others like it, but only because of two. The first of these is that Muḥammad is not the Messenger of God, and the second is that God is the third of three. All else that he says is true.

When I saw that you and your friends of the Ta'limiyyah have weak intellects, and that it was only in the externals that you were mistaken, I descended to your level, giving you a drink in a water carafe, providing you thus with a cure. I was gracious towards you, as a doctor with a sick man. But if I had said to you that this was a remedy, and had given it to you in a medicine bottle, your nature would have prevented you

from accepting it. Even if you had accepted it, you would have been grieved by it, and would hardly have taken it. This is my reason for changing these names and for inventing others. He who understands this will know it, and he who denies it will be ignorant.

He said : I have understood this in its entirety, but where is that which you have promised, namely, the balance with two pans and a single arm on which both are suspended ? In this rule I see neither pan nor balance arm. Where, in these rules, is there anything resembling the steelyard ?

I replied : Have I not derived this knowledge from two premises ? Now, each premise is a pan of the balance, and that aspect which is common to each premise and is contained in each is the arm. Let me give you an example from jurisprudence, which perhaps you will understand better. When we say : "All intoxicants are forbidden," this constitutes one pan ; then we say : "All wine is an intoxicant," this constitutes the other pan. The conclusion is that all wine is forbidden. There are but three elements contained in these two premises : wine, intoxicant, and forbidden. The element "wine" is to be found in only one premise, and is one pan. The element "forbidden" is the other premise, and is the second pan. Now the element "intoxicant" is mentioned in both premises and is repeated, being com-

mon to both. It is thus the arm.⁷ The pans are suspended from it in the same manner as the subject is attached to the attribute, in our saying : "All wine is intoxicating." Here wine is the subject, described by the attribute "intoxicating". In the case of the other pan, the attribute is attached to the subject, as in our saying : "All intoxicants are forbidden." Reflect on this until you understand it. False use of this rule sometimes comes from the pan, sometimes from the arm, and sometimes from the manner of suspending the pan from the arm, as I have remarked to you in an example taken from the rule of the Devil.

The rule which is compared to the steelyard is that of concomitance, since one of the arms of the steelyard is much longer than the other.⁸ When you say : "If the sale of an absent object were valid, such a sale is binding by virtue of the fact that the obligation is made clear," this is the longer premise which contains two aspects, that which must follow and that which is dependent upon the first entity. The second is the saying : "The obligation is not made clear," which

7. This element corresponds to the middle term in philosophical discussions of the syllogism. As al-Ghazālī observes, it is distributed, that is, it must appear in both premises but does not appear in the conclusion ; Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, Book I, chap. 4.

8. The distinction, of course, is between a conventional balance with equal arms and the (Roman) steelyard with unequal arms.

is the other premise, the shorter of the two. This closely resembles the small weight which serves to balance the pan in the steelyard.

In the rule of equivalence the two pans are the same so that neither is longer than the other, each containing only subject and predicate. Understand this and with it also understand that the spiritual balance-rule is not like that which is material, but only resembles it in some manner. Thus it is possible to compare it in the sense that it provides a conclusion from the union of two premises, given that one element of one of the premises also occurs in the other—in this case it is “intoxicant,” found in both premises. Thus a conclusion is obtained. If there is not a common element which is contained in both premises, as, for example, in the sayings: “All intoxicants are forbidden,” and “Everything which is the object of anger is guaranteed,” then no conclusion at all follows.⁹ These are indeed two premises, but there is no relationship or union between them, since no aspect of one forms a part of the other. A conclusion can follow only when an element of one premise is also contained in the other,¹⁰ an element which we have termed the “arm of the balance”.

9. The latter saying is an allusion to the principle in the Islamic community that objects of spoliation will be recompensed, as being the community's responsibility.

10. Aristotle, *op. cit.*, I. 5, 27a, 21.

If you were able to see the comparison between the sensibilia and the intelligibilia you would also have opened to you the gate of comparison between the present world of sight and the world of the future, which is unseen. In the latter there are great mysteries; whoever has not attained to it is deprived of the several lights of the Qur'ān and its teaching, and of its knowledge has but attained the husk. As the Qur'ān contains the rules of measurement for all sciences, so also it contains the keys to all sciences, as I have indicated in my book, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*,¹¹ which you should consult. The parallels between the world of sight and the invisible world are shown by the presence in dreams of truths which convey meaning through allegories for the imagination. Visions seen in dreams are indeed a part of prophecy,¹² and in the world of prophecy is shown forth the fulness of this world and the next.

Here is an example taken from dreams. A man saw in his dreams that he held a sort of seal in his hand with which he sealed up the mouths of men and the private parts of women.¹³ He recounted his vision to Ibn Sirīn, who told him: “You are a muezzin who summons people to

11. Literally: “Pearls of the Qur'ān,” not yet translated into English.

12. Traditionally, they are one-forty-sixth of prophecy.

13. Eating and sexual intercourse during Rāmāḍān are referred to.

prayer before the dawn." He said: "It is so." See how in this example the state of the man is shown from the unseen world, and then draw a parallel between this example and the call to prayer before dawn during Ramadān. It is possible that this muezzin sees himself on the Day of Resurrection, having in his hand a seal of fire while it is said to him: "This is the seal with which you seal the mouths of men and the private parts of women." The muezzin will then say: "By God! I have not done this." They will then say to him: "Indeed, if only you had done thus, but you were in ignorance. This is the inner significance of your act." The truths of things and their inner content are revealed only in the world of spirits. The inner meaning is veiled in obscurity of form in this world of dissembling. Now, "We have removed from thee thy covering, and so thy sight is piercing."¹⁴ In the same manner, whoever has neglected one of the commands of the Law will be disgraced. If you desire the truth of this, refer to the chapter, "On the Reality of Death," in *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*,¹⁵ where you will see wonderful things. Meditate for a long time herein and it may be that the door to the future will be opened to you, and you will hear distant

14. The Qur'ān, 50 : 21, interpreted mystically.

15. See also his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, Part 4, Book 10 (not yet translated into English).

things through it.

For my part I do not see that it will be opened to you who wait for the knowledge of truths from an absent teacher whom you do not see,¹⁶ and whom, if you did, you would find considerably weaker than yourself in knowledge. Take such knowledge from one who has thus journeyed and learn from it, for it has failed the man who is well informed.

He said: That is another question upon which you and I could dispute for a long time. This absent teacher's face I have never seen, even though I have had reports of him, like the lion which also I have never seen but of which I have seen traces. I have heard my mother before her death, and also the lord of the fortress of Alamūt, giving the absent teacher very high praise by saying that he knew all that happened on the earth, even a thousand parasangs away.¹⁷ Should I now contradict my mother, that chaste and modest woman, or the lord of Alamūt, whose life and intimate thoughts are so virtuous? Indeed not! These are two sincere witnesses. How could they not be, since they concur with my companions of Damghān and Iṣfahān, to whom submis-

16. The hidden *Imām*: see Watt, *Faith and Practice of al-Ghazālī*, pp. 46-47, 53.

17. The lord of Alamūt was Ḥasan Ṣabbāḥ (or al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ), on whom see the Introduction to this translation. A parasang (Persian) is about five miles.

sion was due and to whom the fortresses capitulated.¹⁸ Do you really think that they were mistaken, for they were people of intelligence, and that they dissimulated while being pious? Away with this nonsense! Put this aside, for our lord of Alamūt knows what is going on between us without doubt, since "not the weight of an atom escapes him," whether on earth or in heaven.¹⁹ I am afraid to expose myself to his hatred simply because I listen to you and give attention to your proposals. Stop this drivelling and get back to the rules. Explain the rules of the Devil.

18. The history of the insurrection is given in Hodgson, "The Isma'īlī State, ch. 5 of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. V, and Lewis, *The Assassins*. See maps.

19. The Qur'ān, 34 : 3, emended and audaciously transferred from God to the lord of Alamūt.

*On the Rules of the Devil and How These Are
Used by the Ta'limiyyah*

I replied : Listen now, my poor friend, to an explanation of the rules of your friends, for you have greatly exaggerated. Understand that for every rule which I have mentioned from the Qur'ān the Devil has one to match it, which he puts beside the proper rule in order to cause error. However, the Devil can enter in only where there is a breach, and whosoever has well stopped up this breach is secure. The number of such breaches is ten, which I have collected and explained in my works, *Mihakk al-Nazar* and *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*,¹ together with other details of the conditions of the rules. I will not mention them here in view of your inability to understand them. If you are looking for a full account you will find it in the *Mihakk (al-Nazar)*, while a detailed explanation will be found in the *Mi'yār (al-'Ilm)*.

For the moment, I will give you but a single model, which is that which the Devil suggested to Abraham when God spoke the

1. Both of these are more detailed philosophical discussions as al-Ghazālī says.

words : "We have sent no Messenger or Prophet . . . but that Satan cast into his fancy, when he was fancying ; but God annuls what Satan casts, then God confirms His signs."² This happened when he hastened towards the sun, saying : "This is my Lord, for he is greater." Because it was greater, the Devil wished to deceive him thus.

The way in which this is used is as follows. "God is most great" is a premise which is accepted by agreement. "The sun is greater than the stars" is the second premise which is known by the senses. It follows from these that "The sun is God," which is the conclusion. This is a rule which the Devil has firmly attached to the small rule of equivalence. For the term "greater" is an attribute applied both to God and to the sun, and so one imagines that one of them may be an attribute of the other. This is in fact the reversal of the small rule of equivalence, its definition being that two things apply to one entity, not that one thing applies to two. For if two things apply to one entity, an aspect of one of them is predicated of the other, as we have shown above. But, if one thing applies to two, one of these two cannot be an attribute of the other. Consider how the Devil has confused things by this

2. The Qur'an, 22 : 51 with the words "before thee" omitted in the text.

reversal.

We may demonstrate the falsity of this rule with the aid of an example which is manifestly false. Take the case of colour. Now the term "colour" applies to both black and white, but it does not follow that we may describe white as black, nor black as white. On the contrary, if someone were to say : "White is a colour and so is black, therefore it follows that black is white," that would indeed be false. Similarly, the saying : "God is most great and so is the sun, therefore the sun is God," is also false, because it would imply that two opposing entities could receive the same attribute. That two entities may have the same attribute does not thereby imply a connection between them. But if one entity possesses two attributes, this implies that there is a connection between the attributes. Whoever understands this will know the difference between there being one entity with two attributes and two entities with the same attribute.

He said : Now the falsity of this method is clear to me, but when have the Ta'limiyyah used it in their teaching ?

I replied : They have often used it in their teaching. I cannot spare the time to recount them all, but I will give you one model. You have often heard them say : "Truth lies with the one and falsehood lies with the many ; the school of

personal opinion (*rā'y*)³ engenders many (views) while that of the *ta'lim* leads to but one ; hence it follows that truth lies with the school of *ta'lim*."

He said : Yes, I have often heard this, and have believed it, understanding that it was a decisive proof in which there was no doubt.

I replied : It is the rule of the Devil. See how your friends have fallen headlong, and how they have used the rule of the Devil and his reasoning in seeking to refute that of Abraham and the other rules.

He said : How do we escape their error ?

I replied : The Devil has confused things by multiplying words and by creating disorder so that you will not see where the confusion lies. All this leads to the statement that "truth" may be described as "one"—this is one premise ; and to the statement that the *ta'lim* is described as "one"—this is the second premise. It is then said : "It follows from this that the school of *ta'lim* is described as 'true' for 'unity' is predicated of one thing. As two things are thus described, it must be necessary that one of the two be described in terms of the other." This is like

3. Personal opinion (*rā'y*) was one of the sources of jurisprudence and theology allowed by the Sunnī tradition as a means of interpreting the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. As al-Ghazālī implies, the Ta'limiyyah opposed it, substituting "authoritative teaching" (*ta'lim*).

your saying : "Colour is an attribute given to both black and white, hence it follows that white must be an attribute of black." This is like the saying of the Devil : "'Most great' is an attribute given to both God and the sun, hence it follows that 'God' is an attribute of the sun." There is no difference between these rules, in saying that "colour" applies to both black and white, in saying that "most great" applies to both God and the sun, and in saying that "one" applies to both the *ta'lim* and to the truth. Reflect on this and understand.

He said : I have well understood this, but I am not happy with just one example. Give me another concerning the rules of my friends in order that I may be reassured that they are indeed led astray by the rules of the Devil.

I asked him : Have you not heard their saying : "Truth is known only either by *rā'y* alone or by *ta'lim* alone, and that the denial of one is an affirmation of the other. Now, it is false that one can know the truth by *rā'y*, that is, rational personal opinion, alone, for the rational opinions and the schools contradict each other. Hence, it is established that truth is known by *ta'lim*" ?

He said : By God, I have often heard this, for this is the key to their mission and their primary argument.

I replied : This is a rule of the Devil, who has attached to it the Rule of Opposition. Certainly the negation of one of two categories implies the affirmation of the other but only on condition that there be a complete disjunction between them and not one which is incomplete. The Devil confuses the incomplete with the complete here. This disjunction (in the saying) is incomplete since it does not turn on *either* affirmation or denial. It is possible that there may be between these a third division (*tertium quid*), that is, that truth may be known by rational personal opinion and *ta'lim* together.⁴

Here is an example which is known to be false. Someone may say : "Colours are not perceived by the eye, but by the light of the sun." We ask : "Why ?" He replies : "Because it must be that they are perceived either by the eye or by the light of the sun. Now it is false to say that they are perceived by the eye, for the eye cannot perceive them by night. Hence they are perceived by the light of the sun. Someone will say to him : "Poor man ! There is a third division, that is, that they are seen by the eye, but in the light of the sun."

He said : I would like you to explain further

4. Al-Ghazālī uses the word "division" where we would use the term "possibility" or "case". It is used again in the following paragraph.

the error you mentioned in respect of the first example, that of truth and the one, for there is a very fine point in understanding where the error lies.

I replied : The error consists, as I have mentioned, in the confusion of the attribution of one predicate to two things with the attribution of two predicates to one thing. The basis of this error is the illusion to which this reversal gives rise,⁵ for whoever knows that all truth is one may perhaps suppose that every single entity is true. This converse does not follow. That which does follow is a particular converse, namely, that "some aspect of one entity is true". When you say : "Every man is an animal," the universal converse, "Every animal is a man," does not follow but rather the statement : "Some animals are men."⁶

The Devil, in order to confuse the weak-minded, employs no ruse stronger and more frequent than the universal converse. This is even used with regard to sensibilia, so that whoever sees a black rope with various colours is afraid because it resembles a snake. The cause of his fear is that he knows that all snakes are long and of varied colours. His fancy thus proceeds to make a uni-

5. The subject is interchanged with the predicate.

6. Compare Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, [Book I, chapters 2 and 3.

versal converse, judging that everything which is long and of varied colours is a snake. But this universal statement does not follow. The converse and the contradiction contain many fine points which you will understand only through the *Mihakk al-Nazar* and the *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*.

He said : With every example I find greater peace of mind in finding out the rules of the Devil. Do not be miserly—give me another case.

I replied : The rule may be wrong sometimes because of a malfunction in that the suspension of the pans from the arm may not be absolutely vertical, sometimes because of the pan itself and the bad material from which it is made. It may be made of iron, of copper, or from the hide of an animal. But if it is made from snow or cotton you cannot weigh with it. Likewise, a sword may be a poor one in its shape, in the case where it has the form of a baton which is neither flattened nor sharp, or because of the bad material from which it is made, if wood or clay are used.

It is the same with the rule of the Devil. It may be bad due to a fault in its presentation, as I have indicated in the case of the size of the sun and in that of unity and truth. Their forms are defective and converted, as though one sought to weigh with a balance whose pans were

above the arm. The Devil's rule may be due to false material, as in the case of the saying of Iblis : "I am better than him (man). Thou hast created me of fire and him Thou hast created of clay," in his reply to God's question : "What prevented thee from bowing before that which I didst create with mine own hands?" Iblis has here introduced two rules. First, he has justified his prohibition of adoration (before man) by virtue of his superior being. Secondly, he has established his superiority from his being made out of fire. If you clarify all the parts of his argument you find that his rule is correct in its presentation but faulty in its matter. Its form is as follows : "I am better than he is ; the better does not bow down ; thus I will not prostrate myself." Neither premise in this argument is valid because they are not known. The things which are obscure are evaluated through those which are clear,⁷ but what Iblis has stated is neither clear nor admitted. Our reply is : "We do not admit that you are better—thus denying the first premise ; in the same way for the second, we do not admit that the better is not obliged to prostrate himself, for such obligation and worth derive from the command and not from superiority." Iblis

7. The Qur'ān, 38 : 75 f.

8. That is, one uses that which is clear to establish that which is less clear.

has put to one side the demonstration of the second premise, that the obligation derives from the command and not from superiority,⁹ and has concerned himself with establishing that "I am better because I have been created from fire." This is an appeal to superiority in origins.

The full form of this demonstration and his rule is: "Whoever has a better origin is better; I have a better origin; hence I am better." Both these "pans" (i.e. these principles) are false, for we do not admit that "whoever has a better origin is better". Superiority derives from personal qualities and not from one's origin. It is possible that iron may be better than glass, but it is also possible to make something from glass which, by its workmanship, is better than something made from iron. Thus we say: "Abraham is better than the sons of Noah," even though Abraham was begotten by Āzar,¹⁰ who was an unbeliever, while the sons of Noah were begotten by a Prophet. With regard to the second premise, "I have been created of something better," as if fire were better than clay, this also we do not admit. On the contrary, clay is better because it is made of dust and water. One may say

9. The translation follows that Arabic text established by Chelhot, who finds the order of terms confused here.

10. For Āzar see the Qur'ān, 6 : 74, where he is said to worship idols.

that their admixture contains both animal and vegetable, and that these provide both growth and development while fire corrupts and destroys everything. Thus to say that fire is better is false.

These rules are true in their form but false in their substance, as is the comparison of the sword to wood. Even more, they are like the mirage of a spring which a thirsty man takes for water, until he arrives and finds nothing. Rather, he finds God, Who renders him his due.¹¹ Thus the Ta'limiyyah will behold their own state on the Day of Resurrection, when they will have the truth of their rules unveiled for them. Here, then, is one of the ways in which the Devil enters. It must be stopped up.

That which provides true substance for speculative thought is solely the premise known either by the senses, or by experience, or by a tradition with sound transmission, or by the first principles of reason, or by deduction from these as a whole. As for him who uses the methods of argumentation and dialectic, these are what one's adversary recognises and admits, even though they are not thus seen by him. The argument turns against him. Certain proofs in the Qur'ān are of this type. You should not refuse

11. That is, he hoped to find succour, but instead found death.

to use the proofs of the Qur'ān if you should happen to doubt their premises (i.e. those of dialectic), for they are to be adduced in the case of communities which recognise them.

How Muḥammad and the Learned Men of His Community Have No Need of Another Imām, and the Way in Which the Knowledge of the Veracity of Muḥammad is Shown, That of Those Who Know,¹ A Way Which is Clearer Than the Consideration of Miracles and More Sure Than It

He said : You have completely cured me, you have raised the veil (from my eyes), and you have performed a wonder.² But you have built a castle and destroyed a town. Until now I had counted on you to teach me how to apply the rules, and with your help and that of the Qur'ān of being free (of the need for) the sinless *Imām*.³ But since you have mentioned these minutiae, by which error creeps in, I have lost hope that I may now be independent. I have no certainty that I shall not make an error in applying this rule, since I now see why men differ in their schools (of religion). This is because they have not understood

1. Arabic *'arīfīn* indicates a gnostic sense.

2. Literally : "You have performed (something) with a white hand"—allusion to Moses, whose hand became white when he performed a wonder.

3. Or impeccable *Imām*—see Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 46, 52.

these minutiae as you have understood them,⁴ so some of them err and others attain the mark. For me now the best way will be to ask assistance from the *Imām*, so that I am saved from these minutiae.

I replied : Poor man ! Your knowledge of the *Imām* is not a necessary one. It is either received (*taqlid*) from your family, or it is measured with one of these rules. For every knowledge which is not primary (i.e. of first principles) must necessarily derive from the presence of these rules in one who knows them, even though he may not perceive it. You have learned the truth of the evaluation from the working of these two premises within your mind, the experimental and that of the senses. It is the same with other men, even though they do not perceive it. For example, whoever knows that this animal is not pregnant because it is a mule knows this by the operation of two premises,⁵ even though he may not know the source of his knowledge. Thus all knowledge which a man acquires in this world is attained in this way. When you, for your part, affirm your belief in the sinlessness of the *Imām*, or even Muḥammad, by the received tradition (*taqlid*) of your family and friends, you do not thus separate

4. Chelhot reads "comme je les ai comprises," but "you" seems to make better sense here.

5. See above, Chapter Two.

yourself from the Jews and the Zoroastrians, for this is what they do.⁶ If you use one of these rules, you may err in one of the finer points, and thus cannot be sure.

He said : It is true ! But where is the (right) Path ? You have closed both the paths of *ta'lim* and of the use of rules.

I replied : Indeed not ! Return to the Qur'ān. It has taught you the path when you say : "The godfearing, when a visitation of Satan troubles them, remember, and then see clearly."⁷ God does not say : "They travel, and then see clearly."⁸ You, in turn, know that knowledge is manifold. If you were to start travelling to the *Imām*, whom you claim is sinless, over every difficulty, this would give you much hardship for little knowledge. Your path is to learn from me how to use these rules and to fulfil their conditions. If some question is difficult for you, you should submit it to the rules, then you will reflect on its conditions with a clear mind and strong zeal and will see clearly.

It is as when you reckon up how much you owe to the greengrocer, or he to you, or when you investigate one of the questions concerning religious obligations, and you do not know whether

6. Al-Ghazālī attacks "blind acceptance," or "naive belief". Compare Watt, op. cit., pp. 10, 21, 27, 28, 33, 34, 72.

7. 7 : 200.

8. I.e. travel to the *Imām*.

you are right or wrong. It would take you long to travel to the *Imām*. So you learn your arithmetic well, you remember it and come back to your calculations time after time until you are absolutely sure that you are not mistaken over any slight point. Whoever knows arithmetic will know this. In the same way, whoever knows how to use the rules as I do and remembers them, reflects upon them, and returns to them time and again, will finally gain absolute certainty that he is not mistaken. If you do not follow this path, you will never gain success and will end up by doubting even "perhaps" and "it may be"! It is also possible that you will err in your naive belief in your *Imām*, or even the Prophet in whom you believe, for the knowledge of the veracity of the Prophet is not itself necessary.⁹

He said : You have helped me to see that the *ta'lim* is true and that the *Imām* is the Prophet (Muhammad).¹⁰ You have recognised that no one can receive knowledge from the Prophet without a knowledge of these rules, and that he cannot gain a complete knowledge of these rules except from you. It is as if you claimed the *Imāmate* for yourself alone. Where is your proof, and where is your miracle? My *Imām*, either

9. Necessary in the sense that it follows necessarily.

10. *Ta'lim* here refers to the teaching of Muhammad. Al-Ghazālī seeks to have Muhammad alone recognised as *Imām*. See Watt, op. cit., pp. 46 and 82-83.

perform a miracle or produce a text (of Scripture) which has been handed down from the fathers. Where is your text and your miracle?

I replied : You say : "You claim the *Imāmate* for yourself alone"—not so ! I aver that I should like to share this knowledge with another so that it should be possible to learn from him as well as from me, and so that I should have no monopoly over the teaching. You say : "You claim the *Imāmate* for yourself." But understand that by *Imām* we mean someone who is taught by God, through the mediation of Gabriel—I do not claim this for myself. We also mean someone who is taught by God and by Gabriel, by the mediation of the Messenger. In this sense we designate 'Alī as *Imām*. In that the teaching is from the Messenger and not from Gabriel I claim the *Imāmate* for myself.¹¹

My proof is more evident than Scripture and what you claim to be a miracle. Suppose that three people claim before you to know the Qur'ān by heart. You say : "What is your proof?" The first answers : "My proof is that al-Kisā'i, the master of readers,¹² has transmitted the text

11. Alternative interpretations of the term *Imām* are given. The first accords with an extreme Shi'i position (which al-Ghazālī rejects), the second with the non-technical sense of the term, i.e. simply "leader".

12. See Watt, Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān, p. 49.

to me, since he transmitted it to the teacher of my teacher, who then transmitted it to me. Hence it is as though al-Kisā'i transmitted it to me." The second says : "My proof is that I will change this rod into a snake."¹³ He then performs this. The third says : "My proof is that I will recite the whole Qur'ān in front of you without the text," and does so. I would like to know which of these proofs is clearest to you. Which of these is most worthy of belief?

He said : He who recites the Qur'ān. This is the most conclusive proof, which leaves me in no doubt. In the case of the transmission of the text from his teacher, and the transmission from al-Kisā'i to his teacher, one may imagine that errors might creep in, especially if there is a long chain of transmission. In the case of changing the rod into a snake, why, he may have done this by a ruse or deception. If not, then it is an astounding deed, but whence does it follow from the ability to perform such a deed that he knows the Qur'ān by heart?

I replied : My proof also is that I learned these rules and teach them and make them understood, eliminating doubt from your heart concerning their truth.¹⁴ Belief in my Imāmate follows for you, as if you have been taught arith-

13. Allusion to Moses—see the Qur'ān, 27 : 10.

14. Arabic "its truth".

metic, you gain a knowledge of arithmetic and also a sure knowledge that your teacher is an arithmetician and knowledgeable in arithmetic. From his teaching you learn of his knowledge and also of the truth of his claim : "I am an arithmetician."

In the same way, I have given credence to the veracity of Muḥammad and of Moses, not through the splitting of the moon,¹⁵ or the changing of the rod into a snake. Such (demonstrations) lead to much delusion, and cannot be trusted.¹⁶ Indeed he who believes in the changing of the rod into the snake may at the same time disbelieve in the bleating of the calf, with the disbelief of the Samaritan.¹⁷ There are many contradictions in the sensible and visible world. But I have taught you these rules from the Qur'ān and I have measured with them all knowledge which is divine. Even more, I have assessed the conditions of the future life, the torments of the impious and the rewards of the obedient, as is mentioned in my book, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*. I have found them all to be in conformity with what is in the Qur'ān and the traditions (which go back to Muḥammad). I am thoroughly convinced of

15. The Qur'ān, 54 : 1, with ḥadīth. See Wensinck, *A Handbook of Muḥammadan Tradition*, p. 164.

16. Compare al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*, Tr. Kamali. pp. 181-82.

17. Allusion to the Qur'ān, 7 : 146 and 20 : 86 f.

the veracity of Muḥammad and that the Qur'ān is true. I have done that which was said by 'Alī : "You shall not know truth by the men ; rather, know the truth and then you will know those who have it."¹⁸

My knowledge of the veracity of Muḥammad is thus a necessary one, as is your knowledge of a stranger¹⁹ who is speculating on a question of jurisprudence and excelling therein so that he gives a clear ruling. You cannot doubt that he is a jurisprudent and your certainty that he is a jurisprudent is stronger than the certainty which would be adduced if he were to change a thousand rods into large serpents. This sort of proof (that he was a jurisprudent) could derive equally from the use of magic, delusion, talismans, and such like, and leads to a weak faith, such as is that of the common people and the theologians (*mutukallimīn*). As for the faith of those who see, the beholders of the divine lamp, this comes about as we shall discover.²⁰

He said: I too desire to know the Prophet as you know him. You have said that one may attain this only by the observance of all the

18. Compare Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 39-40 and 42.

19. Chelhot translates "un arabe," but his Arabic text has "stranger".

20. A reference to the mystical dimensions. See al-Ghazālī's *Mishkāt al-Anwār (The Niche for Lights)*, Tr. W.H.T. Gairdner.

divine rules for its attainment. Now it is not evident to me that all religious knowledge can be possible only by means of these rules. How can I know this ?

I replied : I certainly did not claim that I used this rule to ascertain religious knowledge alone. I also use this method of measurement for arithmetic, geometry, the natural sciences, jurisprudence, *kalām* (theological discourse), and all knowledge which is true but founded on authority. Thanks to these rules, I may distinguish the true from the false. Why should this not be so, since this is the Just Balance which is spoken of alongside the Scripture and the Qur'ān in the words : "Indeed, We sent Our Messengers with the clear signs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance."²¹ As for your knowing that I have this ability, you will not attain this with a (transmitted) text, nor by the changing of a rod into a serpent, but solely by seeking to discover it by experience and examination. (Take the case of) a man who claims to be a good horseman—you will not find out the truth of his claim until he mounts a horse and rides along the way. Ask me whatever you will concerning divine knowledge and I will uncover the truth in it for you, bit by bit. I will use these rules so that you attain a neces-

21. 57 : 25.

sary knowledge that the method of measurement is true and that the knowledge which issues from it is certain. Whoever does not make this trial cannot know.

He said : Can you teach everybody the truths and the divine knowledge so that all controversies are eliminated?

I replied : Indeed not ! I cannot do this. As if your infallible *Imām* had up till now eliminated all controversies between people and had removed doubts from their hearts ! Why, when have even the Prophets eliminated controversies or when have they had the power to do so? Controversy among people is on the contrary a necessary and eternal condition. "They continue in their differences excepting those on whom thy Lord has mercy. To that end He created them."²² Should I thus dare to oppose the decree of God, Who has decreed this from eternity? Can even your *Imām* do this? And if he claims to, why has he kept this ability to himself while the world is overflowing with controversies? I wish I knew whether 'Alī, the head of the community, was the cause of abolishing controversy, or whether, instead, he was the cause of establishing controversies which will never cease until the end of time !

22. The Qur'ān, 11 : 120-21.

How to Deliver Men from the Darkness of Controversies

He said : How can men be saved from these controversies ?

I replied : If they listen to me, I would remove controversies among them with the aid of the Book of God. But there is no means to make them hear. If they have not listened to the Prophets nor to your *Imām*, how will they listen to me ? How will they agree to listen, when it has been decreed from eternity that "they continue in their differences . . . to that end He created them"?¹ That controversies should exist among them is necessary, as you will learn from my book *Jawāb Mufaṣṣal al-Khalāf*, in twelve chapters.

He said : And if they were to listen, what would you do ?

I replied : I should treat them according to a sole verse of the Book of God : "Indeed . . . We sent down with them the Book and the Balance so that men might uphold justice. And We sent down Iron. . . ."² If God has sent down these

1. The Qur'ān, 11 : 120-21, cited above.

2. Ibid., 57 : 25-26.

three things, it is because people form three groups. The Book, the Iron and the Balance correspond to three methods of treatment.

He said : What are these groups and what is the treatment ?

I replied : People form three groups : the common folk, who are the people of peace, the simple people, those of Paradise ; the elite, men of insight and special perception ; and between these two groups there is another, the people of dialectic and contention. "They follow the ambiguous part in the Book, desiring dissension."³

I would treat the elite by teaching them the rules of justice and how to make use of them. This would eliminate the difference amongst them at once. These people possess three qualities. The first is a penetrating disposition and a powerful intelligence—this is a natural gift, an innate capacity which cannot be acquired. The second is that they are free of all naive acceptance and blind adherence to any school of thought which is inherited or received. The man of naive acceptance does not listen, and the stupid man would not understand if he did. The third is that they believe that I am one of those who see clearly with regard to the Balance. There cannot be guidance except after trust, and who-

3. Ibid., 3 : 6. Al-Ghazālī has interpolated the words "in the Book" from the previous verse.

ever does not believe that you know arithmetic cannot learn from you.

The second group, the simple folk, is that of the generality of people. These do not have the intelligence necessary to understand the truths. Even if they did have such natural intelligence they would not have the tenacity to search. Their preoccupation is the crafts and the professions. Neither do they have the tenacity for dialectic, showing skill in artful debate with those of knowledge, being slight of understanding. These do not engage in controversy, but they choose between *Imāms* who are thus engaged. I would summon these people to God by preaching, just as I would summon the men of insight through wisdom, and the men of contention through dialectic. God has grouped these three classes in one verse, as we mentioned above : "Call thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom (*ḥikmah*) and good admonition."⁴

I would say to them what the Messenger of God said to the Arab who came to him and said : "Teach me the unusual aspects of knowledge." The Messenger of God saw that he did not have the ability for this and so replied : "What do you

4. Ibid., 16 : 126. This is the second time al-Ghazālī has quoted this verse—see the beginning of Chapter One. On this occasion the words "and dispute with them in the better way" are omitted from the text. For the three classes of people read into this verse by both al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd, see Chapter One.

know of the foundation of knowledge, that is of faith, piety, and preparation for the hereafter? Go and acquire this foundation and then return, when I will teach you the unusual things.”⁵ I would say to the generality of people: “It is not your concern to be involved in controversies, so keep away. Beware of engaging in them, paying attention to them, and so perishing! If you pass your life in the art of a goldsmith, you are not a weaver. You pass your life in other things than knowledge, so how can you be fit for such controversy? Look after yourself lest you perish. For the common man to commit a grave sin is less serious than for him to become immersed in knowledge so that he becomes an unbeliever without knowing why.”

If I am asked: “I must have a religion to believe in and by which to act, so that I attain pardon; now men differ in their religions; which religion do you command me to follow?” I would reply: “The religion with foundations and branches. Differences arise in these two alone.”⁶

As for the foundations, you have only to believe in what is in the Qur’ān, for God does not hide His attributes and His names from His

5. A *ḥadīth* classified as *ḍa‘īf*, that is, weak, by the commentators.

6. “Branches”—that is, the systematic elaboration of the principles of religion. See below.

servants. You should believe that there is no god but God, that God is living, knowing, powerful, that He sees and hears, that He is mighty and magnificent, holy and without equal, and all that is reported in the Qur’ān and agreed on by the *Imāms*. This is sufficient for the truth of religion. If some doubt arises within you, say: “We believe in God, all is from our Lord,” and believe all that has been established concerning the affirmation and denial of the attributes (of God) in order to magnify God and mark His holiness, at the same time refusing to recognise any likeness and affirming that God has no compeer. Beyond this do not become preoccupied with what is said and you will not then be under obligation to these matters as they are beyond your ability.

And if he makes a show of his skill and says: “I have learned from the Qur’ān that God is knowing, but I do not know whether He is knowing with His essence or whether with some knowledge which is superadded, on which question there is disagreement between the Ash‘arites and the Mu‘tazilites,” then he has gone beyond the bounds (appropriate to) the ordinary people. The ordinary people do not concern themselves with such questions unless the Devil of disputa-

7. The Qur’ān, 3 : 6, altered by al-Ghazālī. The Qur’ān reads: “We believe in it (the Book), all is from our Lord.”

tion has moved them. God does not destroy a people except by giving them over to disputation, as it is reported in tradition.⁸ If our questioner becomes involved with the people of dialectic, then I will mention a remedy. This is what I have to say with regard to the fundamentals: have recourse to the Book of God, for God has given the Scripture, the Balance and the Iron. These people are those who refer to the Scripture.

With regard to the branches, do not become involved in what is arguable before you have finished with that on which there is agreement. The community is agreed that the provision for the future life consists of piety and the fear of God, and that fraudulent gain, property ill acquired, slander, calumny, adultery, theft, treason and other things illicit are forbidden. The prescriptions laid down are obligatory.⁹ When you have fulfilled them all I will instruct you about that in which there are differences of opinion. If my enquirer asks me about these questions before he has finished all his obligations, then he

8. According to al-Tirmidhī. See the disputes reported in the Qur'ān, Sūrah 43, especially verses 58 and 65.

9. The obligations imposed by religious law are divided by al-Ghazālī and others into two categories, those which are binding on each individual, and those which must be fulfilled by the community. See Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p. 113 and al-Ghazālī, *The Book of Knowledge*, Section II, Tr. Faris, for a brief note and a more extended treatment, respectively.

is a dialectician and not a man of the ordinary people. When have the ordinary people ever fulfilled all their obligations so that they might enter into what is arguable? Do you see your companions having fulfilled all these, and then being seized by the throat by the disorder of disagreement? Indeed not! The weakness of their intellects in their wandering astray resembles nothing but a sick man on the point of death. The doctors are agreed upon a remedy, but the sick man says: "The doctors differ, some saying that the medicines should be hot, others that they should be cold. Maybe one day I shall need the remedy, but I shall not concern myself until I have found someone to teach me how to overcome the difference."

Certainly, if you were to see a just man who had achieved all that piety requires and who said to you: "There are some questions which cause me doubt; I do not know whether I should wash (before the prayer rite), having touched (a certain thing), been sick, or bled, and if I should fast during Ramaḍān during the night or day, etc.," I should say to him: "If you seek security in the next life, follow the way of caution and adhere to that which is agreed by all. Make your proper ablutions in cases where people differ, for he who does not require this certainly commends it. Observe the fact by night during

Ramaḍān for he who does not make this binding finds it commendable.”

If someone says to you: “I find it difficult to proceed with circumspection when questions arise in which there is neither yea nor nay, that is whether I should pray in the morning or not and whether I should pronounce the name of God with a loud voice,”¹⁰ to such a man I should say: “Now, search within your soul,¹¹ and consider which of the *Imāms*¹² you find most acceptable, and whose answer to these points carries most weight. If, for example, you were sick and there were many doctors in your town, you would choose one of them by an effort of appraisal and not by the whim of a moment or because of your inclination. In matters of religion such an effort of appraisal suffices. Whatever is, in your opinion, most fitting, that follow. If the *Imām* is right, then you and he will have a double recompense; if not, then to both of you will accrue a single recompense.

The Messenger of God spoke thus when he said: “Whoever makes the effort of appraisal and is right will have a double reward, and whoever

10. These are matters on which there are differences of opinion between the various legal schools—see Goldziher, *Le Dogme et La Loi d’Islam* pp. 46 f.

11. That is, ‘use *ijtihad*’ to arrive at an opinion. See *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (rev. edn.) (henceforth EI2), : “*Idjtihad*”.

12. That is, which leader of a legal school, e.g. *Imām Shāfi’i*.

makes the effort but is mistaken will have but a single reward.”¹³ God has referred the matter to the people who exercise *ijtihad* in saying: “Those of them whose task it is to investigate would have known the matter.”¹⁴ The Messenger of God recommended such effort (*ijtihad*) to his people when he said to Mu‘ādh: “By what do you make judgment?” He replied: “By the Book of God.” Muḥammad said: “And if you do not find it there?” Mu‘ādh replied: “By the *sunnah* of the Messenger of God.” He said: “And if you do not find it there?” Mu‘ādh replied: “I make an effort of personal appraisal (*ijtihad*).”¹⁵ He said this before he was commanded and permitted to do so. The Messenger of God said: “Glory be to God Who has given the messenger of the Messenger of God a (solution) which is pleasing to the Messenger of God.” From this it is known that *ijtihad* is recommended by the Messenger of God to Mu‘ādh and others. (This is also the case) of the Arab who said: “I have perished and have caused others to perish, in having sexual intercourse with my wife during the daylight hours of Ramaḍān.” (The Messenger of God) replied:

13. According to Muslim.

14. The Qur’ān, 4: 85. The first half of the verse reads: “If they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority. . . .”

15. According to al-Tirmidhī. This is a well-known account and is also given in Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 46-47. *Ijtihad* may also be translated as “the independent exercise of judgment”.

“Free a slave.”¹⁶ From this it is understood that a Turk and an Indian must free a slave, if they too have done this.

(The use of *ijtihād* is thus required) because men do not have that which is right in the eyes of God imposed on them, for that cannot be known, and that which is not possible is not imposed on them. On the contrary, they are obligated to that which they consider right. In the same way, they are not obligated to make the prayer rite (*ṣalāt*) in garments which are pure, but in garments which they consider to be pure. If they consider their garments to be inauspicious, the command (to fulfil the prayer rite) is not binding on them, since the Messenger of God put off his sandals during the performance of the prayer when Gabriel informed him that they were defiled. He did not return to prayer nor did he complete it.¹⁷ Again, the traveller is not obligated to pray towards Mecca, but in the direction in which he believes Mecca to be, being guided by the mountains, the stars and the sun. If he is right he will have a double reward; if not, then only one. Again, he is not obligated to give alms (*zakāt*) to the poor, but to those whom he con-

16. According to al-Bukhārī.

17. Al-Ghazālī discusses this case further in his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, Part I, Book 4 (The Mysteries of Prayer), chap. 6, Tr. Calverley as *Worship in Islam*.

siders to be poor, for he cannot know the heart of men. Likewise, judges are not obligated, in cases of murder or assault, to seek witnesses whom they know to be truthful, but those whom they believe to be truthful. If it is possible to pronounce a capital sentence on an opinion which is subject to error, that is in believing the truthfulness of the witnesses, why is it not possible (to act in the way we have stated) through opinion based on the witness of personal judgment (*ijtihād*)?

How I wish I knew what your companions would say about this! If there was any doubt about the direction of Mecca, would they say that prayer should be delayed until they could journey to the *Imām* to ask him about it? Would he require them to perform it justly where he could not (give such a direction)? Or would he say: “Exercise personal judgment and follow that,” to whomsoever cannot make such judgment, since he does not know the signs of the direction of Mecca nor the way to gain direction from the stars, the mountains, and the winds?

He said: I have no doubt that the *Imām* would permit a man to exercise personal judgment (*ijtihād*) and would not condemn him if he were to make every effort, even if he were to be mistaken and prayed in a direction other than towards Mecca.

I replied : If a man who prayed turning his back on Mecca were forgiven and rewarded, one is not far from thinking that a man who made a mistake in other matters of personal judgment would be forgiven. Those who make such personal judgments and those who follow them are both forgiven. Some of them do that which is just in the eyes of God, while the others share with them in one of the rewards. They are side by side. They do not contend with one another by forming themselves into groups, especially as one cannot say who is right, for each of them considers that he is right. This is like the case where two travellers exercise personal judgment in deciding the direction of Mecca and differ. Each has the right to pray in the direction on which he decides, and to refrain from denying and opposing that of his fellow, since he is obligated to act only according to his own opinion. He cannot orient himself precisely in the direction of Mecca, as it is seen by god. Thus did Mu'ādh exercise his personal judgment in Yemen, not in the conviction that one could not conceive that one could be in error, but in the conviction that if one were in error one would be forgiven. The reason for this is that, in matters which are laid down in the laws of religion, over which one can conceive that there might be differences in the laws, one aspect approaches its

contrary (interpretation) when it is the object of an opinion given in the course of research. As for that on which the laws do not differ, here there is no controversy. The true state of this question you will find in the section "Secrets of Following the *Sunnah*" which I have mentioned in section ten of the outward actions of my book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*.

The third category is that of the dialecticians. I have summoned them to the truth with courtesy. By courtesy I mean that I am not harsh with them nor violent, but I am gentle with them, using the better way. This is the command of God to His Messenger.¹⁸

The meaning of "dispute with them in the better way" is that I take the premises agreed by the dialecticians and from them deduce the truth by using the rule which is verified as sound, in the manner which I have laid down in my book *al-Iqtiṣād fi'l-I'tiqād* and as far as this limit. If this does not convince the dialectician, because of the way he wishes to have clearer insight, then I shall ascend higher, teaching him the rules (of argument given above). If he is not then persuaded, because of his stupidity, his party spirit, his importunity and his opposition, I would treat him with Iron. God has provided the Iron, and the Balance, together with the

18, The Qur'ān, 16 : 126.

Scripture, in order to make it understood that all men cannot attain justice except with the aid of these three. Scripture is for the commonality, the Balance is for the elite, and the Iron, which has a terrible power, is for those who follow that which is ambiguous in Scripture, "desiring dissension and desiring its interpretation,"¹⁹ they do not know that that is not their concern, and that only God and those versed in knowledge know it, not the dialecticians.²⁰

By the dialecticians I mean a group of men who have a certain intelligence which lifts them above the commonality, but whose intelligence is deficient. Their nature is perfect, but they still retain within them some hypocrisy, some opposition, party spirit and blind acceptance (*taqlid*). This prevents them from attaining the truth. These attributes are "veils upon their hearts lest they understand."²¹ That which causes them to perish is but the deficiency of their intelligence. A maimed nature and a deficient intelligence are far worse than simplicity. According to tradition, most of the inhabitants of Paradise are the simple,²² and those of the highest heaven are they who have sound intelligence. From these two groups are excluded those who dispute over

19. Ibid., 3 : 6. Scripture, Balance and Iron occur in 57 : 25.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 6 : 25 and 17 : 48.

22. A *ḥadīth* regarded as weak by the commentators.

verses of Scripture. These are the inhabitants of the Fire. God coerces them with secular power when He does not coerce them with the Qur'ān.

One must use the sword and lances to prevent these people from using dialectic as 'Umar (the second Caliph) did with a man who asked him about ambiguous verses of the Qur'ān. He hit him with a whip. Mālik did likewise when he was asked about God's sitting upon the throne.²³ He said : "The sitting upon the throne is true, and faith in this is required, but the manner of it is not known, and questions concerning it form a heresy."²⁴ By this means he cut short the disputation. All the forefathers (in Islam) did thus. There is much harm for those who serve God in opening the door to disputation.

This is my way of summoning people to the truth, and of leading them out of the darkness of error to the light of truth. The summons to the elite through wisdom is made by teaching the rule (of argument), so that when the just rule is learned it is not used solely for one type of knowledge but for many. Whoever possesses a balance may, by means of it, weigh an infinite number of quantities. Whoever, in the same way, possesses

23. In explanation of 7 : 53, 10 : 3, 13 : 2, 25 : 60, 32 : 3, 57 : 3.

24. Mālik invokes the principle of *bilā ḥaif* ("without asking how"). See Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, p. 295, and Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, pp. 86, 116.

“the Just Balance” has wisdom. He is given not just one but innumerable good things. If the Qur’ān did not contain the rules of argument, it would not be right to call the Qur’ān “light”. For light does not see of itself, but enables something else to see. It is an epithet of the rule. (If the Qur’ān did not contain these rules), then its words would not be true : “not a thing, fresh or withered, but it is in a Book Manifest”.²⁵ All knowledge is not explicitly contained in the Qur’ān, but it is potentially present within it by virtue of the just rules in it which open the doors of wisdom, wisdom which is infinite. By this I should summon the elite. I should summon the commonality by sound exhortation asking them to consult Scripture and to confine themselves to those attributes of God there given. I should summon the dialecticians by the best dialectic. If the latter decline, I should turn away from preaching and would eliminate their evil by the constraint of the secular power and the Iron, which is revealed together with the Balance.

My friend, I wish that I knew how your *Imām* would treat these three categories. Would he teach the commonality and impose upon them that which they do not understand, thereby going

25. 6 : 59. The implication is that all knowledge is present in some manner in the Qur’ān. The context of the verse speaks of God’s universal knowledge.

against the Messenger of God? Or would he eliminate disputation from the minds of the dialecticians by means of argument, when even the Messenger of God could not do this with many arguments of God in the Qur’ān used with the unbelievers? How powerful has your *Imām* become—more powerful than God and His Messenger! Or would he summon those people of insight to follow him blindly (*taqlid*), when they have not accepted the word of the Messenger by *taqlid*, nor were they convinced by the changing of the rod into a serpent? They have said : “This is a strange deed, but whence does any necessity follow to declare that the one who does it²⁶ be truthful? In the world there are many strange things, magic and talismans, which trouble the mind. Only he who knows all of them and their species can distinguish between miracle and witchcraft and talismans, knowing that a miracle is distinct from the others. In this manner did the magicians of Pharaoh recognise the miracles of Moses, being among the leading magicians. Who, then, has this ability?” Indeed, they wish to know his veracity from his words, as the student of arithmetic learns from arithmetic itself the truth of his teacher’s claim to be an arithmetician.

This is the certain knowledge which convinces the people of wisdom and those of in-

26. Adopting the variant reading rather than “says it”.

sight but which does not convince any others.²⁷ The former, when they have learned in this manner of the veracity of the Prophet and of the Qur'ān, when they have understood the rules (of demonstration) in the Qur'ān which I have mentioned to you and have gained from it the keys to all knowledge, as I have shown in my book, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, how will they have need of your *Imām* and what they can learn from him? I wish I knew what you have learned up till now from your infallible *Imām* and what intricacies of religion have been cleared up and what difficulties resolved! God has said: "This is the creation of God; now show me what those have created that are apart from Him!"²⁸

This is my method concerning the rules of knowledge. Show me what you have grasped of the obscurities of knowledge from your *Imām* until now. When an invitation to dine is given, the aim is not solely the invitation, without the food and partaking of it. For my part I see you summoning people to the *Imām*, and then I see the one who questions him as ignorant as he was before. The *Imām* has not resolved a single difficulty. On the contrary, he has made things more difficult. His interrogation has not gained

27 On the question of certainty in al-Ghazālī's thought, see Jabre *La Notion de Certitude selon Ghazālī*.

28. The Qur'ān, 31 : 10.

him any knowledge but has rather increased his insolence and his ignorance.

He said: I have now spent a long time with my companions, but I have only learned from them the fact that they say: "Follow the school of *ta'lim* and beware of opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*) for they are opposed and cause divisions of thought."

I replied: It is very strange that they summon one to *ta'lim* and then do not teach. Say to them: "You have summoned me to the *ta'lim* and I have responded. Teach me then what you know."

He said: I do not see them adding anything else.

I replied: I too hold to *ta'lim* and the *Imām*, together with the worthlessness of opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*). But, if you will abandon your naive acceptance (*taqlid*), to these I would add the teaching of the mysteries of knowledge and the secrets of the Qur'ān. From it I will extract for you the keys to all knowledge, as I have extracted from it the rules (of demonstration) of all knowledge. I have indicated in my book *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān* how all knowledge issues from the Qur'ān. But I do not summon people to any *Imām* other than Muḥammad or to any book other than the Qur'ān. From the Qur'ān I draw all the secrets of knowledge. My proof

of this is my very word and explanation. It is up to you, if you have any doubts, to test me and prove me. Do you not find that you can learn better from me than from your companions?

Chapter Ten

Of the Forms of Opinion and Analogy and Their Falsity

He said: As for your wish that I should separate from my companions and put myself under your teaching, it may be that what I told you of the command of my mother on her death-bed will prevent me. But I am anxious that you should uncover the nature of falsity to be found in opinion (*rā'y*) and analogy (*qiyās*). I fear, however, that you will find my intellect weak and that you will dissemble. You have termed *qiyās* and *rā'y* rules and have cited a verse of the Qur'ān. It seems to me that these rules are nothing but the *qiyās* which your friends uphold.

I replied: Indeed, no. I am going to explain what I and they understand by *rā'y* and *qiyās*.

Here is an example concerning *rā'y*. The Mu'tazilites say: "God is obliged to order everything for the best for his servants."¹ If they are asked to establish this, they have recourse only to *rā'y*, to an opinion that they judge to be good by means of their intellects, by analogy between

1. A fundamental Mu'tazilite thesis. For a further discussion of the implications of this position, see Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 238-42.

the Creator and His creation and by likening His wisdom to theirs. That which is judged good is *rā'y*, which I do not myself think worthy of confidence for it produces conclusions which the rules of the Qur'ān show to be false. If, for example, I were to assess this with the rule of concomitance, I should say:

If the best were obligatory for God, He would have done it.

It is known that He has not done it.

This demonstrates that it is not obligatory, for He does not neglect that which is obligatory.

If it were said: "We admit that, if it were obligatory He would have done it, but we do not admit that He has not done it," then I would reply: "If He had done that which was best He would have created them in Paradise and would have left them there, for that would be the best for them; now it is known that He has not done this; hence it is demonstrated that He has not done that which is best." This also is a conclusion which follows from the rule of concomitance. Your adversary thus falls into one of two positions, either saying: "He has left them in Paradise," when his lie is exposed, or saying: "The best for them is that they should come forth into the world, an abode of testing, and be exposed to sin. Then (God) will say to Adam on the day

that the hidden things are revealed: Adam, bring forth those who are destined for the Fire. He will say: How many? God will reply: Of every thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine, as it is reported in the sound tradition."² Then your adversary will maintain that that is the best for them, that they be created in Paradise and be left there, since their bliss in this case is not due to their effort or merit. Such favour would be great in their eyes, for favour is (always) weighty. But if they hear and obey, then what they receive would be a recompense which owes nothing to favour. I will, however, spare your ears and my tongue from such an account, and the further task of a response.

Consider; have you seen how great are the evils of *rā'y*? You know that God will place children in Paradise, when they die, in a position inferior to those adults who obey. They will say: "Our God, You do not covet the best for us. The best for us would be to attain their higher position." According to the Mu'tazilah, God would say: "How could I advance you to their position, when they have grown up, have suffered and have obeyed, while you died as children?" They will reply: "It is You Who have caused us to die, have deprived us of a long life on earth and of the highest positions in the hereafter. The best for

2. According to al-Bukhārī.

us would have been not to have died. Why did You cause us to die?" According to the Mu'tazilites, God would then reply: "I knew that if you were to grow up you would commit unbelief and would merit everlasting fire. I knew that the best for you would be to die while still children." At this point adults who were unbelievers would call out from the depths of the fire, crying for help: "Did You not know that we, when we grew up, would commit unbelief? Why then did You not cause us to die while still children? We would have been content with one-hundredth part of what is the position of these children. At this response no reply would be left to the Mu'tazilites concerning God's action and the argument would go to the unbelievers, against God.³ May God be far removed from the words of these impious peoples! Indeed, doing that which is best is a secret which comes from the knowledge of God's secret concerning destiny, but the Mu'tazilites do not reflect on this principle, nor do they seek to know it by means of *kalam*. They have acted blindly like a she-camel concerning it and many opinions against them may be found. This is the example of *ra'y*, which in my view is false.

The example of analogy (*qiyās*) consists in

3. For another discussion of the Mu'tazilites by al-Ghazālī, see *The Foundations of the Articles of Faith*, Tr. Faris, pp. 84-87.

establishing a judgment about one thing by analogy with another. So the partisans of the corporeality of God, the Mujassimah,⁴ say: "God, Most High, has a body." We enquire: "Why?" They say: "Because He is an agent and an artisan and by analogy with other agents and artisans He has a body." This is a worthless analogy. We enquire: "Why do you say that the agent has a body simply because he is an agent?" No rule of the Qur'ān can serve to establish this. The form of this assertion of theirs is the Great Rule and runs like this:

Every agent has a body.

The Creator is an agent.

Hence He has a body.

We reply to this: "We admit that the Creator is an agent. But we do not admit the first premise, that every agent has a body. How do you know this?" After this question they can only rely on induction (*istiqrā'*)⁵ and on appeal to (the use of) extended categories. Neither of these provide a proof.

The method of induction consists of saying: "I have examined all the classes of agents, the tanner, the cupper, the shoemaker, the tailor,

4. See Watt, op. cit., p. 248, and Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed*, pp. 66 f.

5. Literally: "enumeration". See Jabre, *Essai sur le Lexique de Ghazālī*, p. 229.

the carpenter, and others, and have found that they all have bodies. From this I conclude that every agent has a body." To this we reply: "Have you examined all types of agent, or only the greater number?" If he then says: "I have examined some of them," it does not follow that his judgment applies to all. If he says: "I have examined all of them," then we do not agree, for he does not know all types of agents. How is this? Has he examined in this number the maker of the skies and the earth? If he has not examined them, but only some of them, (then a complete judgment does not follow). And even if he had examined them all, did he find (the maker of the skies and the earth) had a body? If he should answer: "Yes," then we would reply: "If you have found this using your analogy as a starting point, how will you use it as a premise to prove what you want to demonstrate? You have used your interior feeling as a proof of what you have found, which is an error."

This is exactly similar in its method of examination to the man who examines the horse, the camel, the elephant, insects and birds, sees them walking on feet and states, without having examined the snake and the worm, that all animals walk on their feet. This is also like the man who examines the animals and observes them eating by moving the lower jaw. He states

that all animals eat thus, but he has not examined the crocodile, which moves its upper jaw. It is possible that a thousand people can be subsumed under one judgment but that one may differ. Induction, therefore, cannot provide a certain conclusion. Such an analogy is false.

With regard to the use of extended categories, there is an example when he says: "I have examined the attributes of agents and found them to be bodily. This is because of their existence as agents or, alternatively, because of their very existence, or for some other reason." Then he sets aside all categories⁶ and states that they possess bodies because of their existence as agents. This is an extended category, used by the Devil to construct his analogies. We have shown that this method is false.

He said: I believe that if all the other categories are rejected, then one is left which must apply. I notice a strong proof which the *Mutakallimūn* (theologians) depend on in their affirmations. They say concerning the question of the vision (of God): "The Creator is visible because the world is visible." Now, it is false to say that He is visible because He is white, for black is visible. It is false to say that He is visible because He is a substance, for an accident is also visible. It is false to say that He is visible be-

6. Accepting Chelhot's emendation.

cause He is an accident, because a substance is visible. If these divisions are rejected, then there remains only the statement that He is visible because He exists. I wish you to show me with complete clarity where the falsity lies so that I no longer entertain doubt.

I replied: I will give you a true example derived from a false analogy and will show you the error. I say: Our affirmation "The world is created" is true, but the affirmation of another who says: "It is created because it has a form, by analogy with the house and other constructions which have forms" is false. Such knowledge does not issue from the creation of the world. One might reply that the true form of this rule is to say:

Everything which has a form is created.

The world has a form.

Hence it is created.

We admit the latter premise, but our adversary does not admit the premise: "Everything which has a form is created."

At this point your adversary falls back on the method of induction and says: "I have examined everything that has a form and found everything to be created, such as the house, the glass bowl, the chemise, and so forth." You already know the falsity of this argument. He may then return to the examination and say:

"The house is created, so let us examine its attributes. It has a body, it subsists by itself, it exists, and has a form. These are four attributes. Now it is false to explain that the house is created because it has a body, or because it subsists by itself, or because it exists. It is, therefore, established that the cause of its existence is because it has a form, the fourth attribute."

Now we may reply to him: "This line of reasoning is false from many points of view, of which we mention four.

"The first is that if we concede you the falsity of the first three explanations, the cause for which your search is not established. It is possible that the judgment be based on a particular cause, neither general nor transitive, on the fact, for example, that the house is a house. If it is established that being apart from the house is also created, in a particular case, then perhaps the judgment is founded on something (else) whose being appears created.⁷ For one may suppose an attribute in particular which unites all others and is not transitive.

"The second is that induction would be true if the examination (of the cases) were exhaustive so that one could not imagine any case that could form an exception. But if the examination

7. As Chelhot remarks, this passage is obscure. He has not located a variant which makes better sense.

were not conclusive, that is, if it did not become either denial or affirmation, one could imagine a case which formed an exception. An exhaustive and conclusive examination is not easy to achieve. It often happens that the *Mutakallimūn* and the jurists do not achieve this, saying: 'If there is another case, show it to me.' Another person may say: 'I am not obligated to show it to you,' and so the discussion is prolonged. Again, it sometimes happens that the logician seeks to give it and says: 'If there were another case we would know it and so would you; the fact that we do not know it demonstrates that there is not another case, for the fact that we do not see an elephant here in our midst shows that there is no elephant.' This poor man simply does not realise that we have never known an elephant to occur if we have never seen one, but that we may later see one. How many ideas we have that are not present now and cannot, therefore, be grasped but that we later learnt of. Hence it may happen that there is another case which forms an exception, of which we are not presently informed and of which we may not indeed learn during our lifetimes.

"Thirdly, even if we do not admit the determination (of the case), it does not follow from the rejection of (the first) three possibilities that

the fourth must be valid. On the contrary, the number of combinations which one can make with four possibilities amounts to more than ten or twenty, since it may be that the cause is one of these, or two, or even three together. Further, these pairs or groups of three are not specified. Indeed, one can imagine as the cause the fact that (the house) is existing and a body, or that it is existing and subsisting of itself, or existing and a house, or a house having a form, or a house and subsisting by itself, or a house having a body, or a body having a form, or a body subsisting of itself, or a body which exists, or subsisting of itself and existing. These are some of the combinations of pairs and the combinations of threes can be pursued further. Understand that the laws show that many causes may be combined together. A thing is not seen (simply) because he who sees it has an eye because it is not seen during the night, nor because it is illuminated by the sun for the blind man does not see it, nor because of a combination of these two factors for the wind cannot be seen. It is seen because of a combination of these factors, because that which is seen has a colour, and for other reasons besides these. This is the law of existence. As for that of the vision (of God) in the after-life, that is another.

"Fourthly, even if we do admit that an exhaus-

tive (examination) has taken place and that (the causes) be limited to four and we put on one side a combination (of causes), it does not follow that the elimination of three factors entails the fourth, but only that the cause is limited to the fourth. It may be that this fourth cause is divided into two aspects and that the law depends upon only one of them. Do you not see that if the division into categories be made in advance and one says : '(The house is created) either because it is a body or because it exists or because it subsists by itself or because it has a form, for example, cubical or round,' and then one rejects three of these, the law does not depend on the form at all. It may depend on a particular form which is to be specified."

By reason of their neglect of these minutiae the *Mutakallimūn* are agitated and their claims are multiplied. They are too closely attached to *rā'y* and *qiyās*. This does not provide a certain knowledge, but is good only for speculative jurisprudential opinions, and for inclining the hearts of the commonality towards that which is right and true. Their understanding does not extend to profound hypotheses. Rather their beliefs derive from weaker causes.

Have you not seen a man of the commonality who has a headache, to whom another says: "Use rose water, for when I have a headache I

use it and it does me good" ? It is as if he said : "It is a headache, and rose water will do him good, by analogy with my headache." The mind of the sick man accepts this and he uses it. He does not say : "Show me first that rose water is good for all headaches, whether they come from cold or heat or from wind in the stomach, for there are many causes of headaches. Show me that my headache is like your headache, that my temperament is like yours, that I am the same age as you and that my craft and estate are similar to yours. The cure varies with all these points."

To seek to verify these points is not the concern of the commonality, for they pay them no attention. Nor is it the concern of the *Mutakallimūn*, for even if they do give them some attention, unlike the commonality, they do not find the means which give them certainty. They are natural⁸ only to those who know Ahmad (i.e. Muhammad), who are guided by the light of God to the luminous quality of the Qur'ān, who have taken from the Qur'ān the proper rule and the Just Balance. They have become men who act justly towards God.

He said : Now there come signs of the truth and gleams of light from your words. Will you

8. Arabic : *shinshina*, that is, natural by created nature, by innate character, and by custom.

allow me to follow you on condition that you instruct me in that which is just ?

I said : Certainly not ! You could not have patience with me. How could you be patient when it comes to learning in ways other than by tradition ?

He said : If God wills, you will find me patient, and I will not disobey you in anything.

I replied : Do you believe that I have forgotten that you have heeded the counsel of your companions and your parents, and of those who have built the edifice of *taqlid* ? You are not suited to be my companion, nor am I suited to be yours. Depart from me, so that there is distance between us. I am preoccupied with ordering my own soul and cannot look after yours as well. I am too concerned with learning about the Qur'ān to instruct you too. Do not seek to see me henceforth and I shall not seek you. My time does not allow me more than this in setting aright what is evil and in striking the cold iron. "I have advised you sincerely ; but you do not love sincere advisers."

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds.

Blessings be upon the Master of the Messengers.

9. The Qur'ān, 7 : 77. In the Qur'ānic context the sentence is uttered by the Messenger Ṣāliḥ (of Arabia) to the unbelievers of his time.

Conclusion

This, my brothers, is the history (of the encounter) that I had with my companion. I have narrated it with all its apparent and hidden defects so that you may wonder at it and so that you may profit by these accounts in seeking to understand those things which are more important than the correction of the school of *ta'lim*. This was not my aim, but take heed and listen.

I beg my sincere (friends) to accept my excuses as they read these accounts, in so far as I have introduced complications or analyses, in so far as I have introduced changes or modifications in the names, and in so far as I have clothed these accounts with figurative meanings and images. Beneath all this is my true aim, a secret which will be clear to those who have insight.

Beware lest you change this structure and try to extract these meanings from their clothing. I have taught you how to measure that which is intelligible by reference to that which is transmitted so that it may be the quicker accepted. Beware also of making that which is intelligible the basis and that which is transmitted into that which follows and comes after. That is odious and detestable. God has commanded you to put

aside all that which is odious and to dispute in the best manner. Beware of differing from this command, for you will perish and cause others to perish, you will go astray and lead others astray.

What does my recommendation serve, since the truth has been obliterated, evil has broken its banks, turpitude has spread around into all corners, and has become the topic of laughter in the towns? Certain people have come to take the Qur'ān as nonsense and have taken the prophetic teachings as words in the air. All this comes from the excesses of the ignorant and their claim to defend religion as knowledgeable people. "But surely, many lead astray by their caprices, without any knowledge; thy Lord knows very well the transgressors."¹

1. The Qur'ān, 6: 119.

Appendix I

Nomenclature of the Ismā'ili Movement

In the Introduction it was suggested that al-Ghazālī identified the Ta'limiyyah with an activist group of the Bāṭiniyyah in Persia. However, evidence from the heresiographers is interesting on this point, and tends to show that the movement as a whole received different names in different areas. Passages from three writers are given below. The three in question all wrote from an orthodox point of view, the first and third being theologians, while the second, the famous Nizām al-Mulk, was more interested in the administration of the Seljuk Empire. The translators' spelling is preserved.

(A) From al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), *al-Farq Bain al-Firāq*, tr. K.C. Seelye: *Moslem Schisms and Sects*:¹

"The true view, according to us, is that the Ummat al-Islām comprises those who profess the view that the world is created, the unity of its maker, his pre-existence, his attributes, his equity, his wisdom, the denial of his anthropomorphic character, the prophetic character of Muḥammad, and his universal Apostolate, the acknowledgement of the constant validity of his law, that all that he enjoined was truth, that the Koran is the source of all legal regulations, and that the Ka'bah is the direction in which all prayers should be turned. Everyone who professes all this and does not follow a heresy that might lead

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him to unbelief, he is an orthodox Sunnite, believing in the unity of Allah. If, to the accepted beliefs which we have mentioned he adds a hateful heresy, his case must be considered. And if he incline to the heresy of the Bāṭiniyah, or the Bayāniyah, or the Mughirah, or the Khattābiyah, who believe in the divine character of all the Imāms, or of some of them at least . . . such an one does not belong to the Ummat al-Islām, nor should he be esteemed" (p. 29).

"Ja'far designated his son Ismā'il to the Imāmate after him; when Ismā'il died during the life of his father, we learned that he had designated his son merely to guide the people to choose as Imām his son Muḥammad ibn-Ismā'il. It is to this view that the Ismā'iliyah of the Bāṭiniyah inclined" (p. 65).

(B) From Niẓām al-Mulk (d. 1092), *Siyāsāt-Namah* or *Siyār al-Mulūk*, tr. Hubert Darke: *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*.

"Whenever the Batinis have appeared they have had a name or a nickname, and in every city and province they have been known by a different title: but in essence they are all the same. In Aleppo and Egypt they call them Isma'ilis; in Qum, Kashan, Tabaristan and Sabzvar they are called Shi'ites; in Baghdad, Transoxania and Ghaznain they are known as Qarmatis, in Kufa as Mubarakis, in Basra as Rawandis and Burqa'is, in Rayy as Khalafis, in Gurgan as The Wearers of Red, in Syria as The Wearers of White, in the West as Sa'idis, in al Ahsa and Bahrain as Jannabis, and in Isfahan as Batinis; whereas they call themselves The Didactics (i.e. the Ta'limiyya) and other such names. But their whole purpose is only to abolish Islam and to lead mankind astray" (p. 238).

2. Compare the statement in the same work, p. 244: "the constant object of them all is to overthrow Islam".

(C) From al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), *Milal wa'n-Nihāl*, tr. D.P. Brewster, from the Cairo edition of 1387/1968: *Religions and Sects*.

"The Ismā'iliyya and their names.

"The best-known of the names is Bāṭiniyya. This name has clung to them because of their judgement that every exterior (*ẓāhir*) has an interior (*bāṭin*) (meaning), and that for every revelation there is an interpretation (*ta'wīl*). They have many names, but each is in the tongue of a local group. In Iraq they are called Bāṭiniyya and Qarāmiṭa, and Mazdakiyya. In Khurasān they are called Ta'limiyya and heretics. They themselves say: "We are Ismā'iliyya because we differ from other sects of the Shī'a by this name and on account of this person (after whom we are named)" (Part I, p. 192).

Note to the Above

Where the theologians are fairly concise and accurate in their manner of classifying and describing the sects, it is clear that Niẓām al-Mulk, by contrast, lumps together a number of anti-establishment movements of revolt. He tends to describe as Bāṭiniyyah all those who seek to controvert the authority of the Seljuks whom he serves.³ Two names of interest, those of the Mazdeans and the Mazdakiyyah occur in the sources cited here. These indicate that the heresiographers confused the Ismā'iliyyah with the Zoroastrians, perhaps because they were not sufficiently well informed about the latter and confused the two quite separate groups.⁴ The Mazdakiyyah, on the other hand, derived

3. See Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, pp. 74-75.

4. See al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 35: "The Bāṭiniyyah, however, do not belong to the sects of Islam, but rather to the sects of the Magians. . . ."

their name from a pre-Islamic revolutionary leader (killed in either 528 or 529) whose name, if not his teaching, lived on long after his death as a symbol of revolt, whatever its objectives.⁵ As noted above, al Ghazālī frequently refers to the Ta'limiyyah in his *Munqidh*⁶ and in the *Mustaḥḥirī* gives other names but concludes his list with the term Ta'limiyyah.⁷ He implies that the Ta'limiyyah are of recent appearance, that their teaching is a "heresy," and speaks both of their "novel utterances" and of the "contemporary members of the sect," whose teachings "differed from the familiar formulations of their predecessors".⁸ In another key passage, which occurs in unpublished sections of the *Mustaḥḥirī*, he states that

this name, Ta'limiyyah, is that which is most fitting for the Bāṭiniyya of this time. Their efforts, in effect, aim above all at preaching the necessity of *ta'lim*, the futility of reasoning, and the obligation to follow the infallible Imām.⁹

This passage shows al-Ghazālī's reasons for considering them as a separate movement, when taken with the *Munqidh*, and may be compared with Ibn Khaldūn's description. Ibn Khaldūn stated that the Ismā'īlīs

have an old and a new persuasion (*maqālat*). Neo-Ismā'īlī propaganda was made at the end of the fifth (eleventh)

5. For Mazdak, see Hastings, Ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, "Mazdak"; R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*; the references to Mazdak in Nizām al-Mulk's *Book of Government*; and *Cambridge History of Iran*, V, 195, 396, and 548-49.

6. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 19, 26, 43-54, 71-74, 77, 85.

7. Jabre, *La Notion de Certitude selon Ghazālī*, p. 295.

8. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 44.

9. French translation given in Jabre, op. cit., p. 296, from *Mustaḥḥirī*, fol. 9b of the British Museum MS. Goldziher published only selections from this work in his *Streitschrift*.

century by Al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣabbāh.¹⁰

The old preaching corresponds with that of the Fāṭimids of Cairo, and, as stated, the new preaching is that of al-Ḥasan's movement. The distinction between the two movements is thus explicitly made by al-Ghazālī, al-Shahrastānī, and Ibn Khaldūn and corresponds with the ensuing political schism between the Fāṭimids and the Nizārīs.¹¹

10. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthal, I, 413. Arabic text given in Goldziher, op. cit., p. 12, note 3. Compare al-Shahrastānī's description, "new preaching (*da'wa*).", Appendix II.

11. See Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. V, Chap. 5.

Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ's Teaching

The following most interesting passage from the writings of al-Ḥasan himself has been preserved in the heresiography of al-Shahrastānī.¹ As al-Shahrastānī states, he knew the passage in Persian and has translated it into Arabic for the benefit of his readers. Lewis gives an account of the sources concerning al-Ḥasan and states that "in addition to his autobiography, Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ also appears to have written theological works. None of these are extant in their original form".² However, we are fortunate to have this summary and to have al-Shahrastānī's comments about the points that al-Ḥasan makes. The translation here given is that by Hodgson and may be compared with the recent translation of Kazi and Flynn.³

"Then the partisans of the new *da'wa*⁴ deviated from this way, when al-Ḥasan ibn aṣ-Ṣabbāḥ proclaimed his *da'wa*. His words failed to be compelling, but he got the help of men and fortified himself in strongholds. He first went up into the fortress of Alamūt in Sha'bān of the year 483.⁵ That was after he had gone away to the land of his imām,

1. Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, ed. Cureton, London, 1846, pp. 150-52; ed. Muḥammad, Cairo, 1948, I, 339 f.; ed. al-Wakīl, Cairo, 1387/1968, Part I, p. 195-98.

2. Lewis, *The Assassins*, p. 147.

3. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins*, pp. 325-28 (reprinted by permission); A.R. Kazi and J.G. Flynn, in *Abr-Nahrain*, XV (1975), 94-97. Hodgson's spelling is preserved.

4. *Da'wa* means "summons" or "preaching".

5. I.e. 483 A.H., corresponding to 1090 A.D.

and had come to know from him how the *da'wa* should be preached to his contemporaries. He then returned, and summoned the people first of all to single out a trustworthy imām arising in every age, and to distinguish the saving sect from the other sects by this point: which was that they had an imām, and others did not have an imām. After the repetitions in what he says about it, the substance of his discourse reduces, ending up where he started from, in Arabic or in Persian, to just this. We will report in Arabic what he wrote in Persian, and no blame attaches to a reporter. He is well-aided who follows the truth and avoids error; and God is the giver of aid and assistance.

"We shall begin with the four chapters (*fuṣūl*) with which he began his *da'wa*. He wrote them in Persian, and I have turned them into Arabic. He said, He who delivers opinions on the subject of the Creator Most High must say one of two things; either he must say, I know the Creator Most High through reason and speculation alone without need of the teaching (*ta'lim*) of a teacher; or he must say, There is no way to knowledge (*ma'rifa*) even with reason and speculation except with the teaching of a trustworthy teacher (*mu'allim in ṣādiq*). (Ḥasan) said, If one asserts the first he cannot deny the reason and speculation of anyone else; for when he denies, he thereby teaches; so denying is teaching, and an indication that the one denied needs someone else. (Ḥasan) said, The twofold (dilemma) is necessary, for when a man delivers an opinion or makes a statement, either he is speaking on his own, or from someone else. Likewise, when he accepts a doctrine either he accepts it on his own or from someone else. This is the first chapter, which refutes the partisans of reflection and reason.

"He notes in the second chapter: if the need for a

teacher is established, is absolutely every teacher acceptable, or is a trustworthy teacher required? (Hasan) said, If one says that every teacher is acceptable, he has no right to deny the teacher opposing him; if he denies, he thereby admits that a dependable, trustworthy teacher is required. This is said to refute the partisans of *ḥadīth* (Sunnīs).

“He notes in the third chapter: if the need for a trustworthy teacher is established, is knowledge of the teacher required or not?—assuring oneself of him and then learning from him? Or is learning permissible from every teacher without singling out his person and demonstrating his trustworthiness? The second (alternative) is a reduction to the first (proposition). He for whom it is not possible to follow the way without a leader and a companion, let him ‘(choose) first the companion, then the way’. This refutes the Shī’a.

“He notes in the fourth chapter; Mankind forms two parties. A party which says, For the knowledge of the Creator Most High, a trustworthy teacher is needed; who must be singled out and distinguished first, then learned from; and a party which accepts in every field of knowledge some who are and some who are not teachers. It has been made clear in the portions that have preceded that truth is with the first party. Hence their head must be the head of the truthful. And since it has been made clear that the second party is in error, their heads must be the heads of the erring. (Hasan) said, This is the way which causes us to know the Truthful through the truth, in a summary knowledge; then after that we know the truth through the Truthful, in detailed knowledge; so that a circular argument is not necessary. Here he means by ‘the truth’ only the need, and by ‘the Truthful’ the one who is needed. He said, By our need we know the imām, and by the imām we

know the measures of our need. Just as by possibility we know necessity, that is, the necessarily existent (God), and by it we know the measures of possibility in possible things. (Hasan) said, The way to *tawḥīd* (declaration of God’s unity) is that way, feather (of an arrow) balanced against feather.

“Then he went on to chapters establishing his doctrine, either supporting or refuting (other) doctrines. Most of them were refutation and disproof; demonstrating error by variety of opinion, and truth by agreement. Among them was the chapter of truth and error, and the small and the great. He notes that there is truth and error in the world. Then he notes that the sign of truth is unity, and the sign of error is multiplicity; and that unity comes with *ta’līm*, and multiplicity with reflection. *Ta’līm* is with the community, and the community with the imām. But reflection is with the various sects, and they are with their heads.

“He put truth and error and the similarity between them on the one hand, and the distinction between them on the other hand—opposition on both sides, and order on one of the two sides (?)—as a balance to weigh all that he uttered on the matter. He said, This balance is simply derived from the formula of *shahāda* (no god but God), which is compounded of negation and affirmation, or of negation and exception thereto. He said, It does not claim the negation is erroneous, nor does it claim the affirmation is true. He weighed therewith good and evil, truth and falsehood, and the other opposites. But his point was that he came back, in every doctrine and every discourse, to affirming the teacher. And *tawḥīd* was *tawḥīd* and prophethood together, if it was *tawḥīd* at all; and prophethood was prophethood and imāmate together, if it was

prophethood at all. This was the end of his discourse.

"Moreover he prevented ordinary persons from delving into knowledge; and likewise the elite from investigating former books except those who knew the circumstances of each book and the rank of the authors in every field. With his partisans, in theology he did not go beyond saying, Our god is the god of Mohammed.⁶ He said, Here we stand (?); but you say, Our god is the god of our reasons, whatever the reason of every rational man leads to. If one of them was asked, What do you say of the Creator Most High, does He exist? is He one or many? knowing and powerful, or not? he answered only to this extent: My god is the god of Mohammed; He is the one who sent His messenger with guidance; and the messenger is the one who guides to Him."⁷

"However much I argued with the people over the premises just related, they did not go further than to say, Are we in need of you, or should we hear this from you, or learn from you? And however much I acquiesced in the need, and asked, Where is the one needed, and what does he determine for me in theology, and what does he prescribe in rational questions?—for a teacher does not have meaning in himself, but only in his teaching; you have shut up the door of knowledge and opened the door of submission and *taqlid* (blind acceptance of authority), but a rational man cannot willingly accept a doctrine without understanding, or follow a way without proof—the beginning of the discussion was arbitrariness (*tahkim*), and what it led to was submission. 'And by your Lord, they are not

6. "theology"—Arabic: *ilāhiyyāt*, translated by Kazi and Flynn as "metaphysics"; literally: "the divine things".

7. The Qur'ān, 9 : 33, in part. Kazi and Flynn give the verse in full, as does the Cairo, 1968, text.

at all faithful till they make you (Mohammed) arbiter of what divides them, and then find no fault, in their hearts, with what you decide, but submit fully.'"⁸

8. The Qur'ān, 4 : 68, Hodgson's translation. Arberry translates this verse: "But no, by thy Lord! they will not believe till they make thee the judge regarding the disagreement between them, then they shall find in themselves no impediment touching thy verdict, but shall surrender in full submission."

Appendix III

Al-Ghazālī and the Syllogism

"The function of the syllogistic expression is not to eliminate but to facilitate the occurrence of the reflective act of understanding. . . . Inversely, when a man pronounces a judgement on the value of deciding to believe, it is not because of a syllogism not even because he accepts the premises of a syllogism but only because the syllogism has helped him to grasp the virtually unconditioned in his acceptance of the premises" (Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, revised students' edition, p. 710).

(A) Al-Ghazālī's Knowledge of Philosophy

In his autobiography, the *Munqidh*, al-Ghazālī states that if he met a philosopher he tried "to become acquainted with the essence of his philosophy".¹ He realised that if he was to make an adequate reply to the philosophers he would have to break new ground as a theologian by studying them in depth, for, in his experience, "none of the doctors of Islam had devoted thought and attention to philosophy".² He wrote:

"I therefore set out in all earnestness to acquire a knowledge of philosophy from books, by private study without the help of an instructor. I made progress towards this aim during my hours of free time after teaching in the religious sciences and writing. . . . By my solitary reading during the hours thus snatched God brought me in less than two years to a complete understanding of the sciences of the philosophers. Thereafter I continued to reflect assiduously

1. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 20; see a much stronger statement, p. 29.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Appendix III

for nearly a year on what I had assimilated. . . ."

The first fruit of al-Ghazālī's study was an objective exposition entitled *The Aims of the Philosophers*, written in 1094.⁴ In this work al-Ghazālī twice refers to his intention of writing the *Tahāfut* (*Inconsistency of the Philosophers*) as a sequel to *The Aims of the Philosophers* and the date of the *Tahāfut*'s conclusion is precisely given as the eleventh of Muḥarram 488 (21 January 1095).⁵ From this evidence it is thus clear that al-Ghazālī spent some three years in intensive study of the philosophers. These works were followed by a number of others, of which the most interesting from our point of view is the *Mi'yār al-'Ilm* ("Standard of Knowledge") written in the ten months after the conclusion of the *Tahāfut* and before his departure for Syria.⁶ The *Mi'yār* sets out to explain the philosophical terminology used by al-Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut*, and is almost certainly referred to in the *Tahāfut*.⁷ The *Mi'yār* illustrates al-Ghazālī's grasp of the essential philosophical tools of his time and his ability to explain their use to others less well equipped than himself.

A general assessment of al-Ghazālī's knowledge of the philosophers suggests that he was well read and that he portrayed them fairly. He was unwilling to condemn philosophy or the philosophers out of hand, as he himself says,⁸ but accepted their methods of argument in logic, in

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. Wolfson's study, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, contains important material on al-Ghazālī.

4. Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie*, pp. 23-24. Al-Ghazālī had arrived in Baghdad in July 1091 (484 A.H.)—Bouyges, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, p. 23.

5. Bouyges, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

7. *Tahāfut*, tr. Kamali, pp. 10, 12, 145.

8. Watt, *Faith and Practice*, pp. 39-42.

particular that of the syllogism. In another important work, *al-Iqtisād fī'l-I'tiqād* ("The Golden Mean in Belief"), he devotes part of his Introduction to the nature and importance of the syllogism,⁹ and in *The Just Balance* he uses the syllogism frequently, as will be seen. It is this use of the syllogism which distinguishes him from the earlier attempts of al-Ash'arī to justify the Orthodox (Sunnī) position in theology.

(B) *Al-Ghazālī and the Syllogism*

The discussions of the syllogism prior to al-Ghazālī have been conveniently summarised by Shehaby¹⁰ and need not be recapitulated here. Al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā' and others had brought the discussion in Arabic to an advanced state and it may be inferred from several passages in al-Ghazālī's works that he was familiar with much, if not all, of their writings.¹¹ As already noted, the *Mi'yār* gives an explanation of philosophical methods. In particular, it discusses the different forms of the syllogism.¹² From his ability to criticise the use that the philosophers made of the syllogism it is clear that al-Ghazālī had a command of the principles involved. A number of interesting points arise, however, on reading *The Just Balance*.

The first of these is that al-Ghazālī chooses to find statements of syllogistic method in the Qur'ān (see Chapters

9. See the translation with notes prepared by Abdu-r-Rahman Abu Zayd, *Al-Ghazālī on Divine Predicates*.

10. Shehaby, *The Propositional Logic of Avicenna*, pp. 4-11, with Rescher, *Al-Fārābī's Short Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics*, Introduction. See also the important work by Madkour, *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le Monde Arabe*, pp. 194 f.

11. For example, *Tahāfut*, tr. Kamali, pp. 10, 55, 122, 145, 201, 214 and Abū Zayd, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

12. Jabre, *La Notion de Certitude selon Ghazālī*, pp. 98-105.

2-6). Now it is already evident that al-Ghazālī knew of the Islamic philosophers' work in commenting on the treatises of the Greek logicians. It can hardly be doubted that al-Ghazālī was aware of Aristotle's role in laying the foundations of the syllogistic method even though his reference in Chapter 6 to those who preceded him is not explicit. Why, then, does he derive these rules from the Qur'ān? Watt has suggested that

"it is doubtless because many of the common people who were adherents of Bāṭinism or likely to be influenced by it were also deeply attached to the Qur'ān that Al-Ghazālī . . . in writing *The Just Balance* against the Bāṭinites had to claim that logical theory was derived from the Qur'ān."¹³

In Watt's view, *The Just Balance* is aimed at the more simple-minded people and is intended to assure them of the truth of the Sunnī position, should they be wavering towards the Bāṭinite position. This view is attractive, but we also find in *The Just Balance* a number of passages which must surely have been intended for more sophisticated believers, as well as al-Ghazālī's division of the believers into three categories, the elite, the dialecticians, and the simple, a division which is repeated elsewhere.¹⁴ One must ask whether al-Ghazālī would deliberately make such statements to the commonality while at the same time forbidding them to engage in the higher forms of theology. This would surely make them dissatisfied with their own position.

Another possibility may be suggested, bearing in mind the reference in Chapter Nine to the summoning of the elite and the extension of the principle of assessment to all

13. Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, pp. 75-76; see also pp. 69-71.

14. For example, *The Foundations of the Articles of Faith*, tr. Faris, Section II.

knowledge. Al-Ghazālī would hardly speak of such an extension to those who were, in his view, unfit to receive it. He may thus have intended this work either for the intellectuals or for the theologians, in the hope that it would provide them with the means of arguing with the Ta'limiyah, with model answers to be given wherever possible. He drew his examples of logical theory from the Qur'ān in order to buttress his arguments and to convince the theologians without having recourse to textbooks on logic which, he says, the theologians could not understand.¹⁵

The second point to emerge from al-Ghazālī's use of the syllogism is that, as Ibn Khaldūn remarked, he was the "first of the moderns," that is, the first to use philosophical methods to the full in the rational defence of his faith. By comparing the work and style of argument of al-Ash'arī with that of al-Ghazālī we can see how much progress was made by the latter, even if some of this progress is probably to be attributed to al-Ghazālī's teacher, al-Juwaynī. Ibn Khaldūn says that the forms of al-Ash'arī's arguments were, at times, not technically perfect

"because the scholars (of his time) were simple and the science of logic which probes arguments and examines syllogisms had not yet made its appearance in Islam."¹⁶

Where his predecessors had made use of analogies in a rather imprecise fashion, al-Ghazālī recognises that both

15. An essential passage in which al-Ghazālī explains his use of the Qur'ān as the source of his five "rules," and in which he says that the Ta'limiyah, the logicians, and the theologians cannot disagree about his procedure, is to be found in Watt, *Faith and Practice*, p. 49.

16. Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthal, III, 51; also pp. 51-52 and 146, with Gardet and Anawati, *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane*, pp. 65-73 and 369, and the fuller discussion in Allard, *Le Problème des Attributs Divins dans la Doctrine d'Ash'ari*.

theology and jurisprudence depend on this important tool and gives a far more precise set of criteria by which arguments should be probed. Quite apart from al-Ghazālī's other achievements, this is in itself a major contribution to the development of Islamic theology and was to have a profound influence.

Finally, the syllogism was to be the basis of many of al-Ghazālī's philosophical discussions, such as those involving creation and the nature of God. A full survey cannot be given here but reference may be made to the discussions of Wolfson,¹⁷ and to articles such as Goodman's.¹⁸ Al-Ghazālī appeals to the appearance of the world rather than to the contingent quality of the world, that is, he argues *a novitate mundi* rather than *a contingentia mundi*. A typical argument is:

It is an axiom of reason that all that comes to be must have a cause to bring it about.

The world has come to be.

Ergo the world must have a cause to bring it about.¹⁹

Another type of argument, that from design, runs as follows:

Any masterly work proceeds from a powerful agent.

The world is a masterly work.

Therefore, it proceeds from a powerful agent.²⁰

17. Wolfson, *op. cit.*

18. Goodman, "Ghazālī's Argument from Creation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, II (1971), 67-85, 168-88.

19. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 72.

20. Abū Zayd, *op. cit.*, p. 1. In the lines which follow he clarifies what he means by his term "masterly." "We mean by being 'masterly,' its perfect order, systematic arrangement, and symmetry. He who examines closely the members of his own body, external and internal, will perceive wonders of perfection which surpass accounting."

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But, as can be seen from *The Just Balance*, al-Ghazālī applies the syllogism to a variety of other situations, e.g. the relationship of the Jews to God, the natural world around us, and the problems of Islamic jurisprudence. Further, he uses it to demonstrate the ludicrous implications of the theological position of the corporealists, the *Mujassimah*. Their argument, as he presents it, runs as follows (Chapter Ten):

Every agent has a body.

The Creator is an agent.

Hence He has a body.

At the beginning of the same chapter he also uses the syllogism to discuss the implications of the Mu'tazilite argument that God is bound to do that which is best. As he shows, their position depends upon an analogy between creation and the Creator. In his view this analogy cannot be an adequate foundation for theology and he uses the syllogism to express their argument and show its logical conclusion, which he finds untenable. The syllogism is thus his main instrument of logic in *The Just Balance*, but we also find him examining the use of induction in Chapter Ten, with devastating effect.²¹

21. In addition to the discussions mentioned above, reference may also be made to the relevant sections of the following articles: Josef van Ess; "The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology," in G.E. von Grunebaum, Ed., *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, pp. 21-50; Michael E. Marmura, "Ghazālī's Attitude to the Secular Sciences and Logic," in George F. Hourani, Ed., *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, pp. 100-111.

Appendix IV

English Translations of the Works of al-Ghazālī

The order followed here is that suggested by Watt in his article, "The Authenticity of the Works Attributed to Al-Ghazālī," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1952, p. 44. In order to identify the works the first word of the Arabic title is given, followed by an English rendering.

First Period—Early Dogmatic Works

Tahāfut—"The Incoherence (of the Philosophers)"

(1) *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah: Incoherence of the Philosophers*, tr. Sabih Ahmad Kamali, Lahore: Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963, reprinted.

(2) *Averroes' Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (The Incoherence of Incoherence), tr. Simon Van den Bergh (Gibb Memorial Series), London: Luzac, 1954. (Al-Ghazālī's argument is given in full in small type, with the exception of the last two problems, which are given in summary form.)

Iqtīṣād—"The Golden Mean in Belief"

Al-Ghazālī on Divine Predicates and Their Properties, tr. 'Abdu-r-Rahmān Abū Zayd, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1970. (Contains 10 chapters on these questions.)

Second Period—"Iḥyā'" Period

Iḥyā'—"Revival of the Religious Sciences"

(This work contains four parts, each of ten books. An outline of the whole is given in D.M. Donaldson, *Studies in Muslim Ethics*, London: S.P.C.K., 1953, pp.

- 159-65. Parts [or "quarters"] are indicated by Roman numerals, "books" by Arabic numerals.)
- I.1 *The Book of Knowledge*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 2nd rev. ed., 1966, reprinted.
- I.2 *The Foundations of the Articles of Faith*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963.
- I.3 *The Mysteries of Purity*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1966, reprinted.
- I.4 *The Mysteries of Prayer*
 (1) Condensed analysis by E.E. Calverley in *The Moslem World*, XIV (1924), 40-22.
 (2) *Worship in Islam*, tr. E.E. Calverley, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1978, reprinted.
- I.5 *The Mysteries of Almsgiving*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf.
- I.6 *The Mysteries of Fasting*, tr. Nabih Amin Faris, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968, reprinted.
- I.9 *Ghazālī on Prayer*, tr. Kojiro Nakamura, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1973.
- II.5 *Friendship and Brotherhood*
 (1) Translation of sections by J. Alden Williams in his *Themes of Islamic Civilisation*, Berkeley: University of California, 1971, pp. 16-28.
 (2) *On the Duties of Brotherhood*, tr. Muhtar Holland, London: Latimer, 1975.
- II.8 *On Audition and Grief*, tr. D.B. Macdonald in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1901, pp. 195-252 and 705-748 and 1902, pp. 1-28.
- II.10 *Book XX of al-Ghazālī's Ihya' 'Ulum ad-dīn*, tr. L. Zolāhdeh, Leiden: Brill.
- IV.1 *On Penitence*, summary tr. C.G. Naish in *The*

- Moslem World*, XVI (1926), 6-18.
- IV.3 *On Fear and Hope*, tr. W. McKane, Leiden: Brill, 1962
- IV.6 *On the Love of God*
 (1) Tr. of sections by J. Alden Williams in his *Islam*, New York: Washington Square paperback, 1963, pp. 184-88.
 (2) Summary tr. by D.B. Macdonald in Hastings, Ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, II, 677-80.
- Bidāyah*—"The Beginning of Guidance"
The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī, tr. W. Montgomery Watt, London: Allen and Unwin, 1953, reprinted, pp. 86-152 (omitting final sections). Reprinted Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963.
- Maqṣad*—"The Noblest Aim"
The Ninety-Nine Names of God, tr. R.C. Stade, Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1970 (translation of one portion of this work).
- Kīmīyā*—"The Alchemy of Happiness"
The Alchemy of Happiness, tr. Claud Field, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964, reprinted.

Third Period—Later Dogmatic Works

- Qistās*—"The Just Balance"
The Just Balance, tr. D.P. Brewster (the present work).

Fourth Period—"Dhawq" Period

- Munqidh*—"The Deliverance from Error"
The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazālī, tr. W. Montgomery Watt, op. cit., pp. 19-85.
- Mishkāṭ*—"The Niche for Lights"
Al-Ghazālī's Mishkāṭ al-Anwār (The Niche for Lights),

The Just Balance

tr. W.H.T. Gairdner, reprinted Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1952

NOTE

A further work from the *Iḥyā'* period, the *Risālatu'l-Qudsiyya*, *The Jerusalem Letter*, reproduces a portion of the *Iḥyā'* and is edited and translated in *Islamic Quarterly*, IX (1965), 65-122, by A.L. Tibawi. The section reproduced comes from the *Iḥyā'*, I.2., Section III, and is included in Faris' translation of *Iḥyā'*, I.2 noted above.

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